

Tuesday September 8 1998

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# The Guardian

Printed in London, Manchester, Frankfurt and Roubaix

INTERNATIONAL

NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

## Body language

### What does a political handshake really mean?

G2 with European weather



## Trendy transatlantic art

### How Noel (and Liam) became an American masterpiece...

G2 Arts, pages 8-9



## Easy access

### Reaching out to higher education

G2 Education, pages 12-13



Reach for the sky: Peter Mandelson at Farnborough air show yesterday. He is friends with Sky chief executive Elisabeth Murdoch, but his office insisted he would act impartially on the Sky bid. PHOTOGRAPH: GARRY WEASER

'I love football and am a great supporter of those who broadcast it...'

Ewen MacAskill, Roger Cowe and Vivak Chaudhary

THE Trade and Industry Secretary, Peter Mandelson, yesterday promised a scrupulous inquiry into the proposed Murdoch takeover of Manchester United, as angry Labour MPs and disgruntled football fans called for it to be referred to the Monopolies Commission. Ministers are privately unhappy at having been pushed into a cleft stick: if the Government approves the deal, it risks alienating a substantial section of fans; if it blocks it, the risk is of losing the support of the Murdoch papers.

# Hague's euro showdown

## Party poll aims to outflank Tory left

Nicholas Watt Political Correspondent

WILLIAM Hague yesterday embarked on the biggest gamble of his short career as Tory leader when he moved to crush a damaging challenge at the party conference by announcing a snap ballot of the party's 300,000 members to win approval of his hardline stance on the European single currency.

Mr Hague said that the party could not look to the future until it has dealt "with one last part of the legacy of the past". Watched by senior members of the Shadow Cabinet, he said: "As long as our party is distracted by endless debates on the single currency we will always have one hand tied behind our backs as we fight the Government. I want to free everyone in the party, whatever their views on the single currency, to fight this Government with both hands and provide an alternative to it."



"typically courageous and straightforward"

Mr Hague's gamble — which will need the support of at least 60 per cent of the membership to have any credibility — immediately laid bare the party's deep divisions over Europe. Within minutes, Mr Clarke dismissed the ballot, while Michael Portillo, the former Defence Secretary, hailed the move as

allow counting before the party conference opens on October 6. Leaflets explaining the pro and anti sides will be enclosed. Mr Hague will kick off a nationwide campaign for a Yes vote with a speech in London tomorrow. In a series of speeches in England, Scotland and Wales he will appeal to party unity by presenting the ballot as a move designed to heal wounds. At yesterday's press conference he said grassroots members were "sick and tired" of the way the rival factions continually rowed over policy. "Party division over the European single currency was one of the largest contributors to our heavy defeat. And we still suffer from continuous stories about division," he said. "Those differences from party policy on the euro find it hard to win attention for anything apart from

their views on this subject, even if they try. Those who support the policy find themselves frustrated and confused by false stories and claims about the level of dissent or the imminence of a shift in policy." Labour and the Liberal Democrats said the ballot highlighted Tory divisions over Europe. Labour accused Mr Hague of panicking ahead of the party conference. A spokesman said: "If he wishes to lock himself into a position based on dogma rather than the national interest, then the Tories will be the losers." Malcolm Bruce, the Liberal Democrats' Treasury spokesman, said the move showed the Tories were "still at war" and Mr Hague was trying to "marginalise" his critics.

Hague takes a lead out of Blair handbook, page 4; Leader comment, page 9

# Dilemma for Yeltsin after Duma's defiance

James Meek in Moscow

RUSSIA was left at the mercy of deepening economic chaos yesterday as parliament refused for a second time to confirm the acting prime minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin, daring President Boris Yeltsin to back down or charge forward into the political unknown — which could mean a national state of emergency.

peachment proceedings against the president, which would prevent Mr Yeltsin dissolving parliament or declaring a national state of emergency to rule without it. The president, gravely weakened by the financial disaster which has blown away the meagre economic achievements of his seven-year rule, may choose what for him would be the radical option — giving in to parliament.

Mr Chernomyrdin won more votes than on his first bid for approval last week when he garnered a mere 94 supporters. But his improved showing was almost entirely due to the switching to him of Vladimir Zhirinovskiy's bogus ultra-nationalist LDPR, and despite winning the votes of two renegade Communists, it is not clear where he could turn for backing a third time.

His second humiliation was foreshadowed at a Kremlin meeting earlier yesterday, when Duma party leaders and members of Russia's upper house, the Federation Council, met Mr Yeltsin to seek a compromise. The president's baffling offer to "look again" at Mr Chernomyrdin's work in six to eight months if the Duma accepted him now was rebuffed. The parliamentary side came up with a list of alternative candidates, chief among them Mr Luzhkov.

Mr Chernomyrdin offered a more detailed, though no less confusing, economic programme in his speech to MPs yesterday. It still appeared to involve unleashing cheap money to settle state and private debts before switching to the opposite extreme in the new year by introducing a "hard rouble" strictly tied to the amount of hard currency and gold in the central bank. Trying to woo the Communists, he recalled the New Economic Programme introduced by Lenin in the 1920s, which allowed a brief flourishing of commerce to rejuvenate a country devastated by civil war.

"We have been thrown backwards several years," Mr Chernomyrdin said. "Hours are passing. We are on the edge of a precipice, and we may be wasting time and losing the country." The Communists were not impressed. Nor was the liberal leader, Grigory Yavlinsky, who said of Mr Chernomyrdin's proposals: "This resembles putting out fires with gasoline."

Meanwhile, the central bank governor, Sergei Dubinin, resigned yesterday, three weeks after the devaluation of the rouble.

Hugo Young, page 8; Leader comment and letters, page 9; Jim White, page 10; Double take, G2, page 7

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In *The Guardian* G2 today: The infants Liam and Noel on the sofa... Is this the new American art?

+ Elizabeth Wurzel, Read my lips + Women + Health + Education + Television, Radio and European Weather

## Council faces £750,000 race payout

Award to official falsely accused of corruption is biggest ever

Helen Carter

**T**HE biggest ever race discrimination payout, expected to be up to £750,000, will be made next month by a council which claims to lead the field in equal opportunities to a senior official who suffered "four years of living hell" at the hands of a colleague.

Sam Yeboah, a magistrate and former head of personnel at Hackney council in east London, had been subjected to a campaign of false allegations by housing director Bernard Crofton, who had "a fixed mental impression that Africans, particularly West Africans, have a propensity to commit fraud", the tribunal found.

After a 104-day hearing, an industrial tribunal yesterday found Mr Crofton — who had been praised for rooting out corruption in the borough — guilty of five race discrimination charges.

Mr Yeboah, aged 52, of Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, is waiting to hear how much compensation he will receive. The payout, which will be decided next month, will take into account his £55,000-a-year salary and the fact that he has been unable to work for two years.

The figure is expected to dwarf the previous highest payout in a race discrimination case, the £350,000 awarded last year to a computer operator at Lambeth council.

The figure may also cover injury to Mr Yeboah's feelings, loss of future earnings and his claims that he is "effectively unemployable" because of the serious nature of the allegations against him.

A spokesman for the Commission for Racial Equality said: "It will undoubtedly be one of the biggest ever awards but we cannot speculate about exactly how much."

The tribunal's 300-page ruling said: "A striking feature of this case has been the number and persistence of false allegations which Mr Crofton has made against Mr Yeboah. The totality of the evidence has led us to the conclusion that Mr Crofton did, and does have a fixed mental impression that Africans, particularly West Africans, have a propensity to commit fraud."

Mr Yeboah, who has been unemployed since he left his job at the start of 1996, said: "This is the first time I have been publicly vindicated, but it does not make up for what I have been through. I have been through a living hell for the last four years."

"This was a direct attack on the colour of my skin. If someone attacks you on this basis, something you have no control over, it is extremely hurtful and distressing. Hackney



**Bernard Crofton (above) had 'a fixed impression that Africans, particularly West Africans, have a propensity to commit fraud'**

councillors failed to act on their own anti-discrimination policy and allowed these lies to continue."

He said no amount of money could compensate him or his family for his suffering. Hackney Council has had 99 claims of race discrimination filed against it in the past five years. Last year it was forced to pay £172,000 to a waiter of Chinese origin who had been bullied and humiliated by managers because his face did not fit.

The dispute between the two former council officials dates back more than six years, when Mr Crofton instructed an audit of all staff, with the aim of rooting out fraud.

Mr Yeboah objected and said the consultants had no right to inspect confidential files. A compromise was reached and Mr Crofton's inquiries into dozens of cases of employment, tenancy and housing benefit fraud saved the council an estimated £3 million.

The discrimination claim was triggered by a memo sent by Mr Crofton which made accusations of fraud, which he wrongly accused Mr Yeboah of covering up.

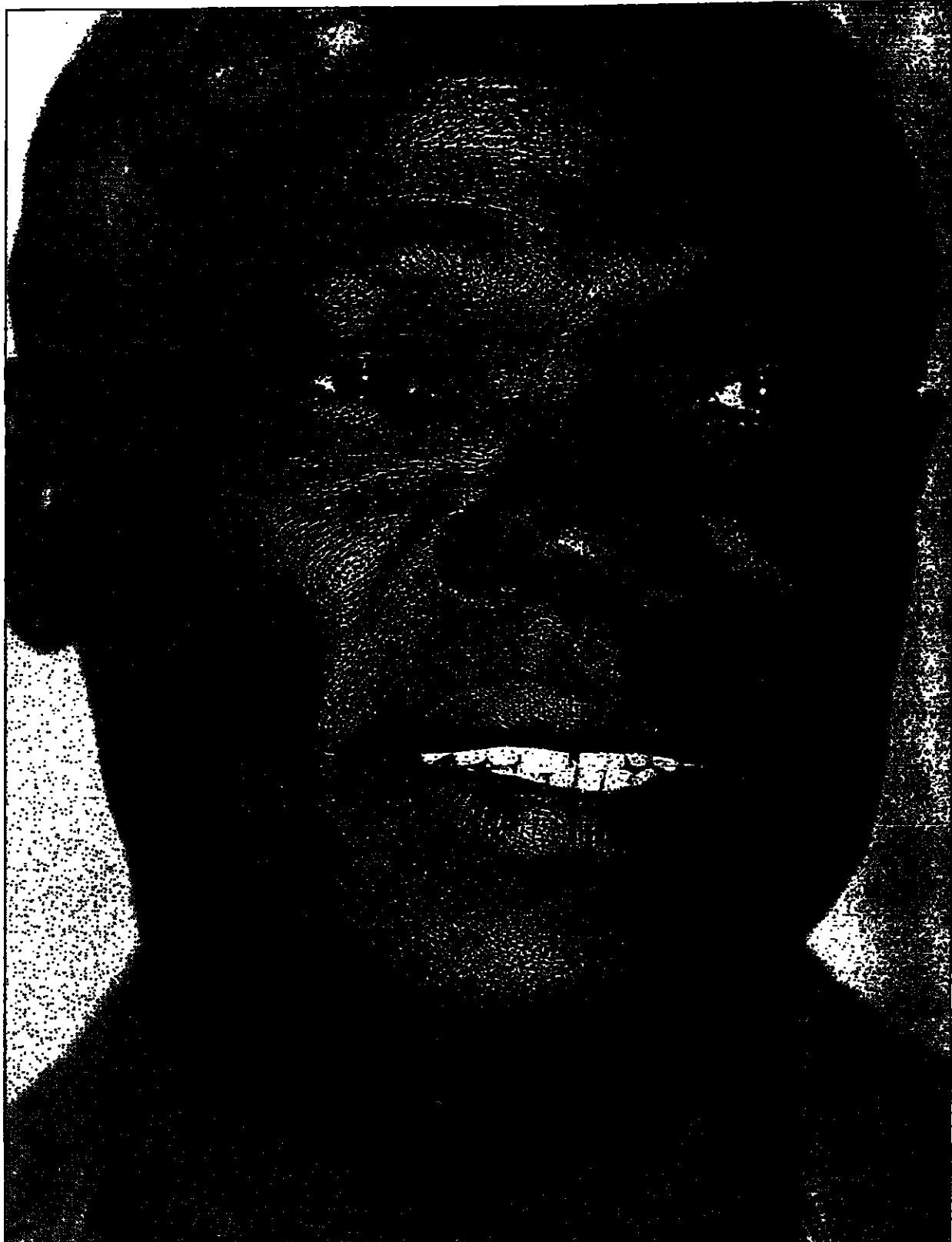
He had Mr Yeboah's name put on a list of suspects sent to the Fraud Squad for investigation, while a member of a special tenancy investigation group made inquiries about his immigration status.

After an inquiry, Mr Crofton was asked for racial harassment in 1996, but was later reinstated by an appeals sub-committee of Hackney councillors.

An independent 12-month inquiry commissioned by Hackney council and headed by Ian McDonald QC in 1996 found that there was no evidence of "any major conspiracy to defraud the council" and accused Mr Crofton of fostering an atmosphere where black employees were subjected to a witch-hunt.

Hackney council said in a statement that they had been taking major steps to tackle discrimination. "We deeply regret that any member of staff should suffer discrimination and victimisation. We will be studying the decisions of the industrial tribunal in detail to ensure that we learn any lessons for the future," it said.

Mr Crofton now works as a consultant for a housing association and was unavailable for comment.



**Sam Yeboah, who could get £750,000. He said no amount could compensate for family's suffering** PHOTOGRAPH: ANDREW STUART

"I have been through a living hell for the last four years. This was a direct attack on the colour of my skin. If someone attacks you on this basis, something you have no control over, it is extremely hurtful and distressing. Hackney councillors failed to act on their own anti-discrimination policy and allowed these lies to continue"

**Sam Yeboah, ex-head of personnel, Hackney council**

Fairy tale grows up into a sensual mermaid's dream

### Review

Tim Ashley

Rusalka  
Coliseum, London

**R**ECOGNISED as a landmark in operatic staging when it was unveiled in 1983, David Pountney's production of Dvořák's *Rusalka*, now revived at the Coliseum by Lynn Binstock, has lost little of its clout.

Its brilliance lies in its radical reinterpretation of its fairy-tale subject matter. Dvořák drew on a number of sources — Czech folklore, Hans Andersen, the German Undine legend (which also provided Frederick Ashton with the material for his ballet *Undine*) — for his fable of the catastrophic passion of a water nymph for a mortal.

Pountney took the lot and allied it with Freud: *The Little Mermaid* collides with *The Interpretation Of Dreams* (which was published in 1900, the year the opera was written). His fairy tale evolves as the fantastic dream of an adolescent girl — alternately fascinated and repelled by images of sexuality — as she sleeps in her nursery. Her mermaid's tail — it's still one of the most upstaging theatrical images — consists of bandages which bind her legs together. The three Wood Nymphs, content with remaining in their element, are her childish, game-playing younger sisters. The adonitory Water Sprite, called "grandfather" throughout, is an aged, wheelchair-bound figure in his second childhood, while the witch Jezibaba, who both helps and hinders Rusalka's progress to womanhood, is an ambivalent goddess, comic and malign.

There are hints, however, of the infliction of horrific emotional wounds — whether potential or actual we are not told — from the adult world around her: the Prince she loves is an older man, weak-willed and duplicitous, who calls her "frigid" when she rejects his sexual violence; the rival Princess is a cynical, manipulative *femme du monde* in a red dress and furs, bent on destruction. Some of Pountney's images now seem over-familiar: more than any other Coliseum staging, it defined the house style during the "Pountney" years, and spawned numerous imitations, many of which have vanished. Time hasn't lessened its impact, however, and it remains one of ENO's finest achievements.

Musically, it is mixed. Richard Hickox conducts a big, bold performance, perfectly attuned to Pountney's vision, unleashing an unstoppable flood of heady emotion and finding whiffs of Wagnerian influences which you don't normally hear in the score. The American soprano Susan Patterson sings Rusalka. She suggests maladjusted gawiness rather than the wall-like innocence which some have brought to the role. Her voice is a knockout — colossal, rich and opulent — though she occasionally sounds too mature in the role. The Prince, Robert Brubaker, is compelling but makes a big, rather unsubtle sound. Catherine Savory reveals a fruity mezzo as Jezibaba, though the voice is on the small side and she's not nearly dominant enough. Janice Cairns is imposing rather than alluring as the Princess. John Connell's Water Sprite, occasionally unfocused, is elegiac rather than vengeful. The orchestral sound, once past a couple of rocky moments in the first act, is unfailingly sumptuous.

## Republicans press for impeachment powers

US politicians are divided on who should see Starr's Clinton report

Martin Kettle in Washington

**I**MPACHMENT proceedings against President Bill Clinton could begin as early as next month if his Republican opponents obtain unprecedented procedural powers to speed the congressional inquiry into the Monica Lewinsky affair.

As Congress returns from its summer break today, with mid-term elections looming, Republicans on the House of Representatives Judiciary committee are seeking to draw up

charges against Mr Clinton soon after the independent counsel, Kenneth Starr, presents his report to the committee later this month.

Henry Hyde, the Republican committee chairman, proposes excluding the rest of Congress initially. He wants the full report circulated only to a bipartisan inner group on his committee, and he wants the power to charge reluctant witnesses with contempt without a full House vote.

Mr Hyde's proposals have alarmed congressional Democrats and even some Republi-

cans. Gerald Solomon, the Republican chairman of the House rules committee which must sanction the procedural plans, insists an executive summary of Mr Starr's report must be available to all members of Congress and that the full version should be published if the judiciary committee proposes impeachment.

House Democrats, who have complained about the "nearly unchecked powers" Mr Hyde seeks, have persuaded top Republicans to join a Capitol Hill summit tomorrow to thrash out the bitter procedural arguments.

Tomorrow's meeting will be attended by Mr Hyde and John Conyers, the senior Democrat on the judiciary

committee, as well as the House Speaker, Newt Gingrich; the House Republican leader, Dick Armey; and the House Democratic leader, Dick Gephardt.

Mr Gingrich is said to be anxious to find bipartisan agreement so as to minimise charges of partisan bias. Any changes in the procedural rules must be voted on by the whole 435-seat House, in which the Republicans have an 11-seat majority.

Under the United States constitution, the House has the sole task of deciding whether a president should be impeached, drawing up the charges — "articles of impeachment". The 100-member Senate, with the chief justice

presiding, then conducts a trial. Leaks said Mr Starr's report will concentrate entirely on the Lewinsky affair, in which Mr Clinton is accused of lying under oath about his affair with the former White House intern and pressuring her to do likewise.

The report is expected to contain "voluminous attachments", including excerpts from grand jury testimony and other evidence. The White House is braced for further intimate details about Mr Clinton's sexual relations with Ms Lewinsky.

The date when the report will go to Congress remains Washington's most closely guarded secret. Mr Starr is

under political pressure to submit it as soon as possible because all House members face elections on November 3, and most want to adjourn at the beginning of October.

Some legislators argue that Congress should remain in session well into October to complete work on the report. Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan of New York, a Democratic opponent of the president, said: "We have to do our duty here."

Meanwhile, the pressure on Mr Clinton continued yesterday when the head of the Southern Baptist Convention said the president, who is a Baptist, should resign "before he is instrumental in corrupting all our young people".

## Lone Atlantic rower gives up after rescue

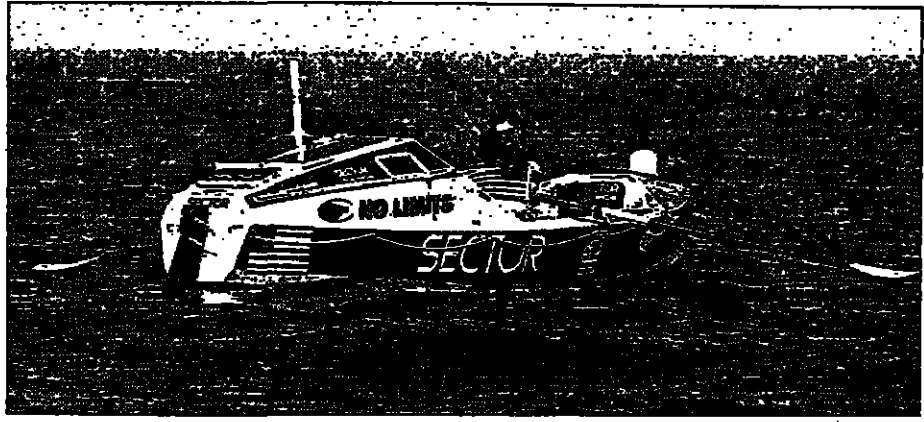
Geoffrey Gibbs

**A**N American rower has abandoned her attempt to become the first woman to cross the Atlantic alone after being rescued by a US-bound container ship assisted by Cornish coastguards and an RAF Nimrod.

Tori Murden was last night heading for Philadelphia after a medical check-up following a head injury. Her boat was left drifting 1,000 miles west of Land's End.

British coastguards launched an air and sea search for the 35-year-old rowwoman early yesterday, after signals from an emergency beacon on board her 23ft boat American Pearl were picked up by satellite. By coincidence, coastguard officers in Falmouth had only minutes earlier received a call from their counterparts in Norfolk, Virginia asking for information about Ms Murden, who had not been heard from since Saturday when her boat was lying in the path of the oncoming Hurricane Danielle.

The veteran adventurer, a



**Tori Murden sets off for France from North Carolina in June** PHOTOGRAPH: BOB JORDAN

lawyer in the mayor's office in Louisville, Kentucky, was spotted standing on board her self-righting craft by an RAF Nimrod sent to the scene when the emergency beacon signals were picked up. She was facing force six winds and sea swell of up to 12ft.

Falmouth Coastguard spokesman Bob Hurrell said the rower had capsized earlier in the day and banged her head. "She capsized twice be-

fore at the tail end of Hurricane Bonnie, and this time she got the tail end of Hurricane Danielle."

Ms Murden had been alone at sea since June 14 when she set off from Oregon Inlet, North Carolina. She is also an experienced mountaineer and canoeist.

She was the youngest member of the International South Pole Overland Expedition that skied 750 miles across

Antarctica to the geographic South Pole, and was the first woman to climb Lewis Nunatak, in the Antarctic.

Only five rowers, all men, have made the 3,500 mile Atlantic crossing single-handed.

Ms Murden, who had been heading for Brest, France, had averaged 26 nautical miles a day during her epic 85-day journey and was more than two thirds of the way to her destination.

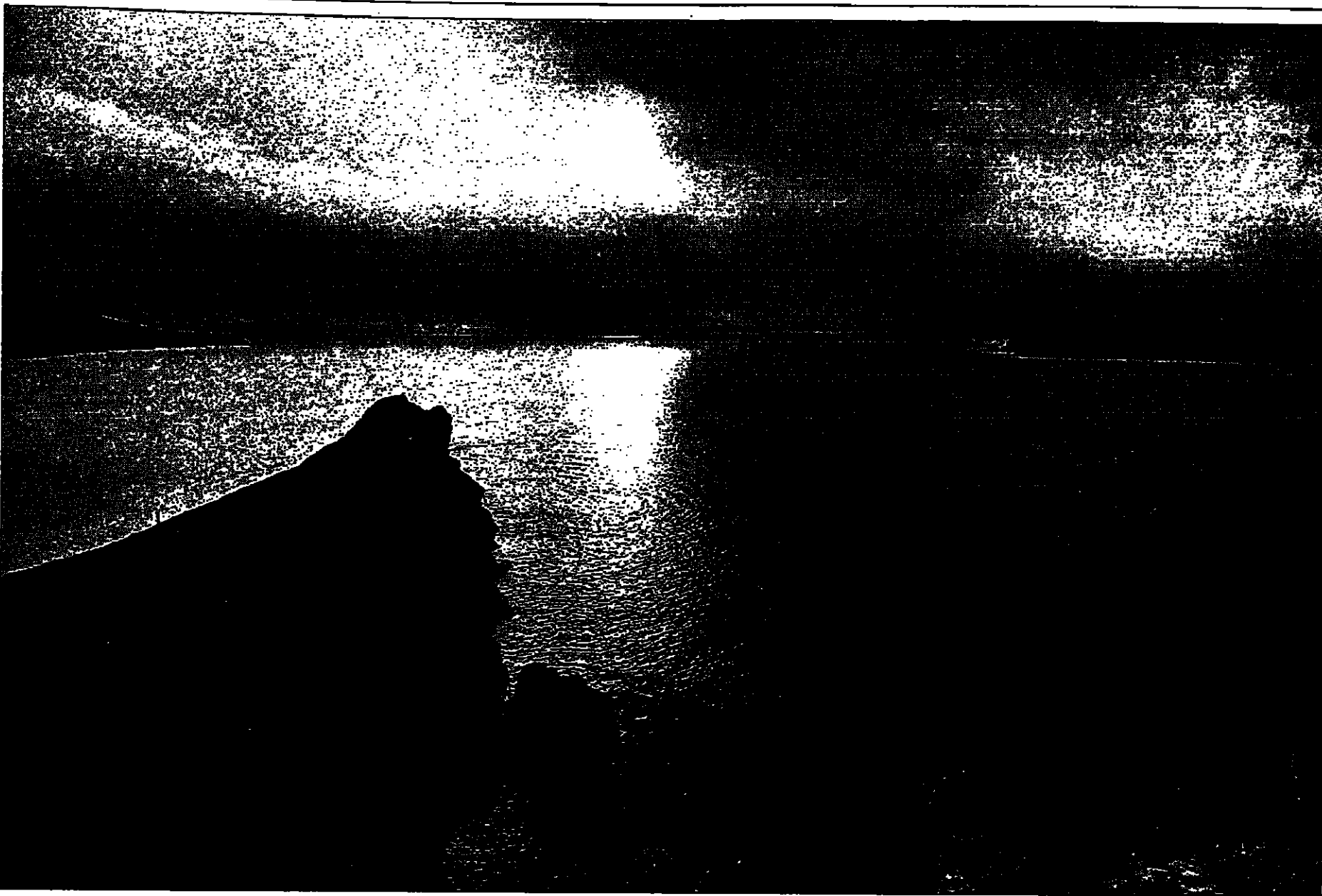
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Secrets of the sea... hydrate exists in vast quantities a few metres below the ocean floor on the edge of continents

PHOTOGRAPH BY GARY WEAVER

## Beneath the ocean bed lies enough frozen fuel to power the planet for centuries

Tim Radford  
Science Editor

**A** NEWLY-discovered source of frozen fuel packed below the ocean floor could power the planet for centuries — if scientists can think of a safe way to tap it.

The vast untapped energy source that is locked away in methane compressed into solid form by the weight of the ocean above it could be double all the coal, natural gas and oil ever burned, or likely to be burned.

The ocean is 70 per cent of the planet, and the Earth's last unexplored region. Oceanographers have pointed out repeatedly that the surfaces of Venus and Mars are better mapped than the ocean floor. But that could change with the gradual revelation of huge potential resources, now including awesome stores of energy frozen in veins and lodes in the ocean muds.

The frozen methane exists on the edge of continents in mud a few metres below the ocean floor in a layer a few hundred metres thick. It was produced by bacteria feeding on the sediment and producing methane as a waste product.

At huge pressures, this methane reacts with ultra-cold water to turn into a kind of room temperature ice, to be preserved for millions of years. This product of natural chemistry is called a hydrate. Each cubic metre of the hy-

drate contains an estimated 160 cubic metres of pure methane, or natural gas.

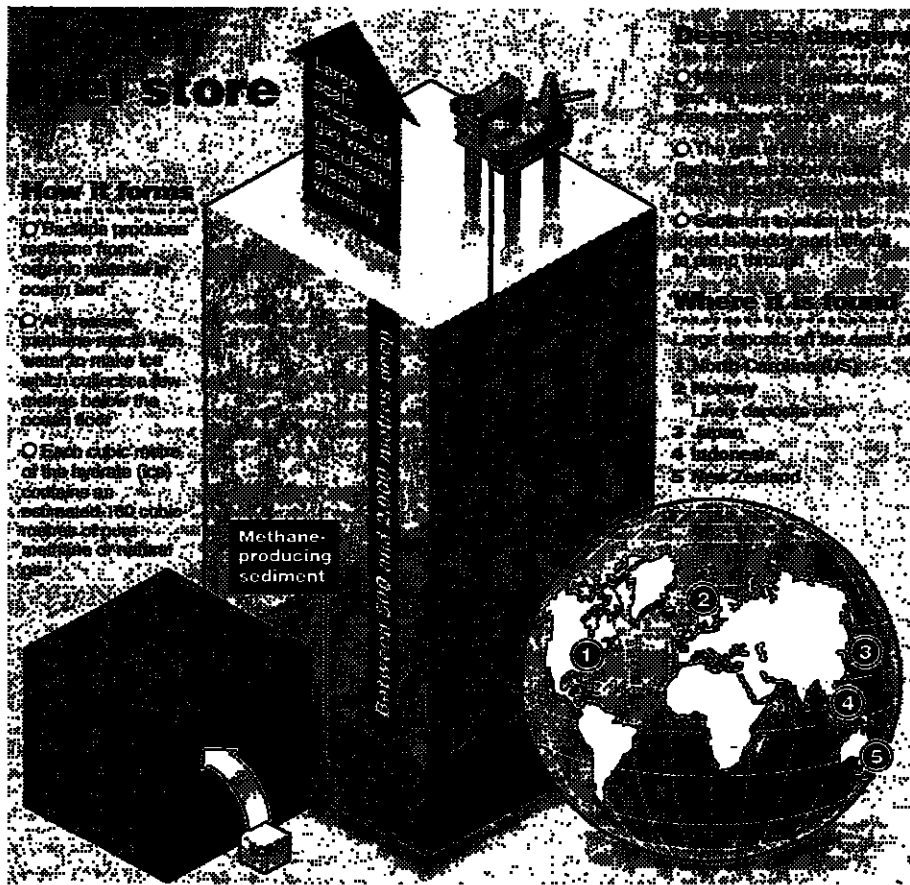
World oil reserves are finite: world oil production is expected to peak in the next decade and then start falling. But demand for energy is likely to go on rising exponentially. A new source of fuel would be regarded as a kind of gold. But like gold, methane hydrates could be difficult to exploit.

"It's in fine grained sediment, it's deep in the oceans, we think it is spread in quite thin layers — we don't know for sure — and somebody has to try and get it out," said Joe Cann, of the Natural Environment Research Council's British mid-ocean ridge research group. "There are lodes, there are veins, there are tiny little dusty bits. We still know very little about it."

One proposal has been to pump warm water down into the sediments to release the gas. Another has been to suck it up through drill pipes.

"Or should you put some kind of enormous tent under the sea floor and begin to decompose it on a large scale underneath the tent, and collect the bubbles and lead them up to the surface? There are all sorts of possibilities — but it is not going to be like getting natural gas out from under the sea floor," Prof Cann said.

Scientists have known about hydrates for more than a decade, but the staggering scale of the potential submarine wealth became apparent only very recently, after



ocean drilling and seismic experiments.

Huge concentrations have been detected by scientific drilling experiments off North Carolina in the US, and off Norway. A sudden escape

of the gas 7,000 years ago may have triggered a tsunami or tidal wave which swamped

Shetland and washed huge boulders ashore. It could happen again: exploitation could even result in a sudden sub-

marine landslide which could trigger calamity on the crowded shore line.

But paradoxically, according to Dr Clennell, the methane ice is already concentrated in the zones of greatest

natural danger. The biggest sources seemed to be where tectonic plates meet, off Japan, Indonesia, New Zealand and so on — the Pacific "ring of fire" marked out by continual earthquakes and volcanoes.

Exploiting the new submarine bonanza would not only be difficult and dangerous in the short term: it would be a problem in the long term as well. Methane is a greenhouse gas, 10 times more potent than carbon dioxide.

Any large-scale escapes would accelerate global warming. But the hydrates remain a tantalising prize. Japan is investing huge sums in research because it has no fossil fuel reserves. India, too, is interested in the energy El Dorado under the sea off its coasts. The US is also interested in the phenomenon as a source of clean fuel.

"We have the technology to drill in deep waters — between 500 and 2,000 metres, where the majority of these gas hydrates are found," Dr Clennell said. "However, that is very expensive. We also have the technology to drill wells that go straight down and then horizontally, so we can follow these gas pockets along."

The research is only just beginning. "The history of hydrates is a history of false dawns," Dr Clennell warned. "The massive amount of hydrate present has to be set against the impossibility — at present — of doing anything with it."

James Melkie

**T**HE Government and European Union were last night trying to shore up consumer confidence in lamb as scientists in Britain and abroad prepared further investigations into possible links between BSE and sheep.

A senior government adviser, Jeffrey Almond, urged the Government to start testing sheep as a "matter of urgency", adding: "I think there is a distinct possibility that BSE is out there in the sheep population." Prof Almond said it would be a "national emergency" if that were so.

The chief medical officer, Sir Kenneth Calman, and officials for the European Commission in Brussels last night said there was no new evidence of a health risk, but they promised to review all available information. The Scientific Steering Committee of the EU is to meet later this month to discuss again whether high-risk parts of sheep should be banned from the food chain — but Britain has already unilaterally introduced controls.

The National Farmers' Union advised Ben Gill yesterday shrugged off a suggestion by the Consumers' Association that parents might not want to introduce their young children to lamb while doubts remain. He said: "Not a single case of BSE in sheep has been identified in commercial flocks. Scaremongering helps no one. It is in all of our interests that we listen to the facts."

The heads and spleens of all sheep and goats and spinal cords of all animals over a year old have had to be removed in Britain since last January, but most sheep meat eaten here is of animals under a

year old. Similar EU-wide proposals by the Commission in 1996 were not adopted elsewhere and it is these that are likely to be revisited by the scientific committee, since Franz Fischler, the Agriculture Commissioner, will be resubmitting the proposals. There was no indication last night that Britain would face tougher rules without more evidence of risk.

"There is no evidence of a health risk from BSE in sheep," said a commission spokesman. "However we cannot exclude it. It is better to be safe than sorry."

The Government's Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee has advised more research into the possible link but said no further action is needed at present. Prof Almond, chairman of SEAC's sheep sub-committee, said on BBC Radio 4 that politicians "would have to live with the possibility that, if they went down the road of stopping the consumption of sheep meat, 40 million animals would be destroyed, a whole industry collapsing, and the consequent cost to the nation of that. To do nothing would be inappropriate, while to ban lamb would be ridiculous".

Prof Almond said only nine sheep have so far been tested for BSE. "Those tests take about two years to run each, and each costs £30,000 so, yes, we have to do more. But the priority in the early 1990s was not to focus on the sheep issue, it was to find out more about the cattle issue, and whether that was going to pose a risk to humans."

Sir Kenneth said SEAC had advised there were "no grounds at this stage for thinking the likelihood of BSE in sheep is any greater now than in the past. We shall review all new evidence and take all precautions necessary to protect [public health]."

## 'Big Mac' hits baseball record

Martin Kettle in Washington

**I**N ONE of those classic moments in American sport that becomes imperishable legend throughout the United States — while remaining all but incomprehensible to the rest of the world — Mark McGwire of the St Louis Cardinals last night hit a record 61st home run of the 1998 season.

Watched by millions on the Labour Day holiday, "Big Mac" McGwire became the latest and perhaps greatest all-American baseball hero, erasing Babe Ruth's iconic 60 home runs in the 1927 season and drawing level with the late Roger Maris's record-breaking 61-homer season in 1961.

With 19 games still left in his 1998 season — and perhaps three further chances in last night's unfolding game with the Chicago Cubs — McGwire seemed assured of capturing the record, taking it into territory where it could last another 30 or more years as the American national game's greatest individual achievement.

The capacity crowd at St Louis's Busch stadium did not have long to wait for McGwire's moment on a hot, humid and hazy afternoon. Batting third in the first inning, he arrived at the plate to a hero's ovation.

He missed the first ball from Cubs' pitcher Mike Morgan, left the second alone, and then blasted the third high and hard into the left field stands to equal the record.

McGwire completed his home run at a trot, to the ecstatic applause of opponents and teammates alike, completing the historic circuit with a little juggle on the plate before acknowledging cheering that lasted for several minutes.

As is custom, the record-breaking ball was grabbed by one of the fans clustered in "Big Mac Land" in left field, where McGwire's bullets normally end up, and for which seats were changing hands yesterday at up to \$400 (£240). Its possession is worth up to \$100,000 to memorabilia collectors.

The fan who emerges with the 62nd-homer ball can expect ten times as much.

**'I love football and am a great supporter of those who broadcast it'**

continued from page 1 the all-party parliamentary group, which represents 120 MPs, said: "Murdoch does not give a damn about football." He said it was all about "rigging the market" in television.

Graham Kelly, chief executive of the Football Association said: "There is a responsibility of those concerned

with such deals to explain them to the wider football audience."

The Manchester Central MP, Tony Lloyd, also a Foreign Office minister, said: "There are concerns that Mr Murdoch and his broadcast-

ing empire already control a big part of live football. Manchester United as a premier team may get a degree of

control which is unhealthy for the ordinary supporter."

Alex Ferguson, the Manchester United manager, said: "I think the ramifications for the playing side will become clearer in the next few days."

Manchester United shares remained at an all-time high of 199p at the end of yesterday, having risen by 48.5p yesterday. But that remains

well below the expected value of BSKYB's offer of 225p per share, and City experts were

arguing yesterday that the club's shareholders would need an even higher price to persuade them to sell.

Initial City reaction sent soccer club share prices soaring, but many gains were wiped out as investors took

flight at the future.

News of the takeover also led to claims that other media companies planned to bid for Manchester United. Names in the frame for a potential bid

include Carlton Communications, Granada and ENIC — a City firm which already owns Vicenza, Slavia Prague, AEK Athens and a 25 per cent stake in Glasgow Rangers.

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# Hague takes a leaf out of Blair handbook in attempt to silence critics of euro strategy

## Nicholas Watt on Tory leader's gamble in trying to impose his version of Clause Four on a sceptical party

ONE of William Hague's most fervent backbench supporters shifted nervously at the back of the conference room at Conservative Central Office as the Tory leader announced his gamble to heal the party's long-running wounds over Europe.

"The battle is not without risk and William must win well over 60 per cent," the young MP said. "But this is William's Clause Four and with a strong vote he will strengthen his command."

His supportive remarks underlined the unspoken strategy behind Mr Hague's decision to reach over the heads of his divided parliamentary party to win support from the 300,000 members of the shadow cabinet's stance on the European single currency.

This was a thoroughly Blairite move — reminiscent of the Labour Party vote endorsing last year's election manifesto — designed to silence internal critics of Mr Hague's decision to rule out membership of the euro for this Parliament and the next.

Mr Hague's style and language were lifted from the New Labour handbook of how to deal with an obstreperous parliamentary party. Michael Heseltine, the Tories' most formidable opponents on Europe, were informed of the move in brief telephone calls a mere 45 minutes before Mr Hague's announcement and the Party Board, which will run the ballot, was simply given its instructions.

In language which could have come from the lips of the Prime Minister, Mr Hague made clear his determination to stamp his authority over the party. "I do not intend to

do this by making a plea for unity. I believe that unity comes through leading, not pleading. I believe it comes through consistency, through clarity, through certainty."

His strategy, worked out over the summer holidays, was designed to consign memories of divisions over Europe to the past and to swing the bulk of the parliamentary party behind him. It was no mistake that Mr Hague chose the same room for his announcement where a hapless John Major made his infamous "don't tie my hands" plea during the election campaign.

"I vowed that never again would we allow the electorate to see us divided and out of touch. I vowed the party would change."

paid and where the party commemorated on the night of May 1, 1997, after the electoral defeat which punished the party partly because of their divisions over Europe.

"I spent the night in this building, watching as our party went down to one of its greatest defeats," Mr Hague announced. "I vowed to myself that we would never let such a defeat happen again. I vowed that never again would we allow the electorate to see us divided and out of touch. I vowed that the Conservative Party would change."

For all his confidence —

speaking in front of a large computer screen which declared Deciding to Win — Mr Hague is woefully mistaken if he believes that Tory pro-Europeans will be silenced in the way that Old Labourites reluctantly accepted the votes on Clause Four vote and the election manifesto.

Mr Hague simply does not command his party in the way that Tony Blair rules unchallenged, and he will only begin to stamp his authority and curtail speculation about how long he can last when he starts to make an impact in opinion polls.

Until then, heavyweight pro-Europeans will not think twice about speaking their minds, as Ken Clarke did within minutes of Mr Hague's announcement yesterday and as his supporters will do throughout next month's Tory party conference.

The former chancellor loftily dismissed the announcement, saying: "I do not believe that this ballot will alter the substance of the policy issue very much. I would expect any leader of the Conservative Party to obtain a good majority in an appeal which will be treated as a request for personal backing for the leader from the membership."

Mr Clarke highlighted the dangers in adopting an inflexible position, particularly when the Government has such a flexible stance. "In opposition, we have no control over events and we do not know how many years it may be before the Government call a full referendum. We should not join now but, if the single currency succeeds, we should stand prepared to join it as and when it is in our interest to do so."

Mr Hague's gamble once again laid bare the deep divisions within the party over Europe. In their heart of hearts Tories know that it will take Mr Blair's premiership, rather than any internal ballots, to resolve the issue. Britain is likely to join the euro after the next election.

If a series of economic criteria are met and the decision has been endorsed in a referendum — which will mean that the irreversible step will have been taken by the time the Tories will be in any shape to win an election.



William Hague aboard Eurostar. He is trying to refine his party's policy on Europe.

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARTIN ARQUES

### For

**KENNETH CLARKE:** Old-fashioned Heathite centrist who believes Britain's economic and political future lies in Europe. Friends insist he will not be too old — he is 58 — to return to the front bench after the next election if Hague falls.

**MICHAEL HESELTINE:** Europe is the defining issue of the former deputy prime minister's career. Although he has retired from front-line politics he is determined to challenge the leadership over Europe.

**DAVID CURRY:** Resigned from shadow cabinet last year over the single currency, saying the Eurosceptic policy threatened to leave the Tories marooned by events.

**QUENTIN DAVIES:** Forthright shadow social security minister is the most vocal pro-European on the Tory front bench.

### Against

**FRANCIS MAUDE:** Smooth-talking shadow chancellor. "Our economy is cyclically and structurally different from the Continent. This is not about any peculiar national idiosyncrasy or insularity, but about real economic factors."

**MICHAEL HOWARD:** Shadow foreign secretary. Condemned Amsterdam Treaty as "an unacceptable step towards an integrated federal superstate".

**DAVID HEATHCOAT-AMORY:** Diffident shadow chief secretary to the Treasury who wants "new and different relationship with the EU, one of free trade and political co-operation between sovereign states".

**TERESA GORMAN:** Any calculations Mr Hague makes must take into account the outspoken MP for Billericay and fellow hard-line Eurosceptics on the back benches.

## Blair unmoved by TUC on jobs

Michael White and Seumas Milne

TONY Blair last night rejected TUC appeals for action to protect manufacturing jobs.

In an hour-long session with a TUC delegation, the Prime Minister told union leaders that the Government had the right mix of economic policies to avoid a recession, provided "nobody panics" and destroys confidence.

He brushed aside calls for an interest rate cut ahead of

next week's annual Trades Union Congress in Blackpool to prevent what one union leader called the looming threat to 250,000 manufacturing jobs.

Though the meeting was "useful, constructive and courteous", according to the TUC general secretary, John Monks, tensions have been raised by job losses, culminating last week in Fujitsu deciding to close its 580-strong microchip plant in Mr Blair's Sedgefield constituency.

Both sides are jittery about talking up recession, but the

TUC believes the Government's austere policies are making one more likely.

Mr Monks and the leaders of the biggest unions, including Bill Morris of the T&GWU transport union, John Edmonds of the GMB general union and Ramsey Bickerstaffe of the Unison public sector union, nevertheless emerged from Number 10 to admit that Mr Blair — who met them alone with his officials — had given no ground.

With some leaders urging a "revival of a bipartisan 'force' approach to jobs and

productivity — a philosophy rejected during the Tory years — Mr Monks explained: "We made a presentation to the Prime Minister about how a partnership approach could improve competitiveness, stressing the positive role that unions can play."

Ken Jackson, leader of the AUEE engineering and electrical union, told Mr Blair that the Bank of England's monetary policy committee should cut interest rates before the TUC meets — if ministers were not to get a rough "revival of a bipartisan 'force' approach to jobs and

remits for the committee, covering employment and growth as well as inflation.

Mr Blair began the meeting by delivering a "politely-worded dressing-down" — in the words of one of those present — over weekend union press briefings that they planned to raise the dangers of job losses and recession.

TUC sources expressed concern last night that they could now be "difficult exchanges" with ministers next week, rather than the "give-and-take relationship" Mr Monks wants.

## Man fined for careless driving after killing jogger

Sarah Hall

A YOUNG driver who killed a level student as she jogged along a country road was fined £250 yesterday.

Samantha Ricketts, aged 17, from Griston, Norfolk, died of head injuries after being struck by the wing mirror of a van driven by Paul Matless, 21.

The tragedy happened as he pulled out to overtake two vehicles — one of which then "messed around", refusing to let him pass.

Samantha, who was hit from behind, was lying to her personal stereo and so was unaware of the danger. Norfolk crown court was told.

Yesterday Matless, a removal van driver from Watlington, Norfolk admitted driving without due care and attention on the B1077 road in Coston on September 22 last year.

He was originally charged with causing death by dangerous driving, but the more serious charge was dropped due to conflicting accounts of what happened and two con-

flicting reports by police traffic investigators.

The decision to substitute the lesser charge had been taken "at the highest level", the court was told.

Stephen Spence, prosecuting, said Matless claimed a Ford Orion car he was overtaking had cut in front of him, causing him to swerve.

Michael Clare, defending, added that the Orion driver was "deliberately messing around on the road and was 80 per cent to blame for what had happened".

Matless — who was 20 at the time of the accident — had seen the teenage jogger when he decided to overtake. "He had a good view and wanted to pass the Orion driver. When he did overtake, the Orion driver increased his speed, keeping him on the wrong side of the road, and the wing mirror of his van collided with the jogger," Mr Clare said.

"This was a simple misjudgment which was exacerbated by the Orion driver's manoeuvre."

At an earlier hearing the Orion driver, Philip Richards, aged 49, of Carbrooke,

Norfolk, admitted driving without insurance and was fined £140.

Yesterday Judge Paul Downes said the prosecution had taken an "entirely proper course" in proceeding with the lesser charge.

A Labour MP who was breathalysed the day after he had been drinking was yesterday banned from driving for 18 months and fined £1,000 for being almost twice over the legal limit.

A breath test revealed Jamie Cann, aged 52, who represents Ipswich, had 64 micrograms of alcohol per 100 millilitres of breath when he was stopped in Martlesham, near Ipswich, Suffolk, 10 days ago. The legal limit is 35 micrograms.

Magistrates at Felixstowe, Suffolk, heard Mr Cann was stopped at 1pm on August 29 as he drove with his wife, Rosemary. Officers smelt alcohol on his breath.

After the hearing, at which he admitted his offence and was ordered to pay £40 costs, Mr Cann said he had been drinking at home the night before because he had difficulties sleeping.

## Cliff on God's tail and pitched above the Pope in Christian fame chart

Sarah Hall

HE IS famed for having more top 10 hits than any other pop star, for not having sex in 38 years, and for being the top female choice for a perfect lover. But yesterday the true extent of Sir Cliff Richard's renown became clear: the Peter Pan of pop is a more famous Christian than the Pope, a survey has found.

Not only that, but the

original Bachelor Boy, who became a born-again Christian in 1966, comes close to surpassing number one — God — for fame.

Mother Teresa comes in at third, followed at joint fourth by Billy Graham and Martin Luther King, then John the Baptist, St Peter and John Wesley. The Pope crawls in at ninth position, one place above former hostage Terry Waite — and five above Tony Blair.

The ranking was made by

253 people of all ages in Downham Market, Norfolk, who were asked by a local Pentecostal church, the Downham Market Christian Fellowship, if they could name a famous Christian. About 9 per cent said Jesus, 8 per cent Sir Cliff, and 2 per cent the Pope. Mother Teresa was chosen by 5 per cent and 0.8 per cent picked Mr Blair.

The Rev Alan Mollineaux, the minister who did the survey, said: "I am not surprised at the number who said Cliff Richard. We may live in a spiritual society but it's non-religious."

The 57-year-old singer may have overtaken Pope John Paul II for being more approachable and less a figurehead, the Mr Mollineaux suggested.

The 38-year-old minister, who admitted he was a Cliff fan, denied he was down-cast at the challenge to Jesus. Christ might have garnered more support but,

as the founder of Christianity, he was not technically a Christian. "I wouldn't have said Jesus," he said. "A lot of people didn't put him first because they were aware of that."

The Roman Catholic Church also refused to be covered by the survey. Tom Horwood, a spokesman for the faith, attributed Sir Cliff beating the Pope to the singer's higher profile in East Anglia following his recent visit to Norfolk.

## New era of supernurses

Lucy Ward

Political Correspondent

TONY Blair will today promise extra pay for a new generation of "supernurses" to reward experienced staff who stay in patient care.

Speaking at the Nurse of the Year awards in London, the Prime Minister will unveil details of an alternative career path for nurses under which top-performing staff would not have to leave the ward or clinic for management roles to break through the pay ceiling.

The commitment to introduce higher salaries comes four days before the deadline for written submissions for the next nurses' pay award. Nursing organisations, furious at a series of staged pay settlements, are promising a fierce autumn campaign for a full award next time round.

Last month the Health Secretary, Frank Dobson, made clear he wanted to abandon staged increases.

Newly qualified nurses earn £12,600 — less than new entrants to teaching or the police — while experienced staff earn between £14,500 and £26,500.

Unions believe recognition of expert nurses is long overdue, though Mr Blair will stop back from indicating how much more money supernurses could expect.

The plans could see top performing staff receiving rises of up to 5 per cent next spring, rather than the 3 or 5 per cent expected to remain the norm in public sector pay deals.

Ministers hope the concept — a parallel to the super-teacher posts being introduced to reward skilled teachers who want to stay in the classroom — will help address the problem of nurses leaving the profession.

Mr Blair will set out more details of proposals to recruit 15,000 extra nurses and establish 6,000 training places over the next three years.

He will also plan for supernurses — or nurse consultants — are designed to raise

the status of staff who opt not to scale the management ladder.

The nurse consultants would have the same status within nursing as that of medical consultants within their profession.

Mr Blair will tell them: "Some nurses at a certain point in their career are happy to move into management but many others want to progress but still retain day to day contact with patients — the reason they came into nursing in the first place."

Unions support the supernurses plan, which would see them running their own clinics in areas such as cardiac rehabilitation, breast cancer or diabetes treatment.

Christine Hancock, general secretary of the Royal College of Nursing, said last night: "We know there are many expert nurses running their own clinics and seeing that patients are treated better and quicker. The Prime Minister's recognition that they are effectively working like a consultant is long overdue."

## Lady in Lake killer is urged to confess

Body of mother found by divers 20 years after she disappeared 'had face shattered by attacker'

David Ward

A CORONER yesterday appealed for the killer of the victim known as the Lady in the Lake to admit his guilt after more than 20 years.

Ian Smith, coroner for Furness in Cumbria, made his plea at the end of an inquest into the death of Carol Ann Park, aged 30, whose trussed up and weighted-down body, dressed in a baby doll nightdress, was found by divers in Coniston Water in the Lake District a year ago.

She had disappeared from her home in July 1976. A pathologist yesterday suggested she died as a result of blows with an axe or meat chopper that had shattered her face.

After recording a verdict that Mrs Park, a mother of

three, had been unlawfully killed on July 17, 1976, at an unknown place, Mr Smith said: "As regards who did it, if that person is still alive I hope they have a conscience and that their conscience is troubling them."

"She was the victim of a nasty, vicious attack, centred on the face. She put her hands up to defend herself, and the fractures seen in her little finger and her wrist are the result of the attack."

Mrs Park's husband, Gordon, who was accused of her murder before charges were dropped by the Crown Prosecution Service in January, was at the inquest in Barrow-in-Furness to hear Mr Smith say: "No one has been on trial here, and if it has looked as if someone was on trial here, I apologise."

In a statement after the

hearing, Mr Park, who has since remarried, said: "I am pleased that this ordeal has now come to an end. The past 22 months have been a great strain, particularly for my children, who have had to come to terms not only with the now certainty that their mother is dead but also with the pressures on me."

Mrs Park, a teacher aged 54, gave evidence at the inquest for 35 minutes, refusing to answer some questions on the advice of his solicitor.

He told of separations from Mrs Park and of how he won custody of the children. "I loved my wife... We had a wonderful family and I believed we could make it right."

He described how they had planned a day in Blackpool on July 17 as a treat for the children. Vanessa, then aged eight, Jeremy, six, and Rachel, five, even though he hated the resort. At the last moment, his wife decided not to go, and he left her in bed "alive and well".

When he returned home with the children, the house



Carol Park... her bound and weighted body was found in lake

was locked. Mrs Park, who the inquest heard had had two affairs and once set up home with a lover in Middlesex, was not there. Her engagement and wedding rings were on the dressing table, said Mr Park.

"I was disappointed, but this was not something new

to me. Here we go again."

Asked to explain, he added: "I thought she had left again."

He reported her missing to his solicitor six weeks later at the end of the school holiday, when he thought she would have returned to start her new term as a teacher. The solicitor contacted the police.

Earlier, Home Office pathologist Edmund Tapp said Mrs Park's body had been weighted down with 12lb of lead piping, folded. It was wrapped in a bag fashioned from a pinafore dress, rucksack and black bin liners. The head and feet had become detached. The body was bound with ropes "in a complex kind of way," said Dr Tapp.

The inquest was told that a pathologist found that nine kinds of knot had been used on the ropes and concluded that whoever tied up the body was probably interested in sailing or climbing.

Peter Sharpe, solicitor for Mr Park's children, said they offered their father "their total and unqualified support".





## News in brief

## Burmese junta detains opposition

BURMA'S main opposition party, the National League for Democracy, said yesterday that the military government had detained 110 of its members in the past two days to thwart its plan to convene a "People's Parliament" this month.

The party said those detained included 50 who won seats in the last general election eight years ago — a poll the party won by a landslide only to see the military ignore the result.

A government spokesman confirmed that NLD members had been detained but gave no figures. He said it was to prevent the NLD calling a parliament, something that "would not be permitted by any government in the world". — *Reuters, Rangoon.*

## Chevenement improves

THE Val de Grâce military hospital in Paris said the interior minister, Jean-Pierre Chevènement, who is in a coma, was improving yesterday, a day after a cabinet colleague said he was in an alarming state.

The hospital said Mr Chevènement, who slumped into a coma last Wednesday after suffering a heart attack during a routine gall bladder operation, was no longer in shock and his vital functions were returning.

Val de Grâce has been so tightlipped about Mr Chevènement, aged 59, that the lack of information is becoming an issue itself. The government spokesman, Daniel Vaillant, said there were no plans to replace him at the moment. — *Reuters, Paris.*

## Tension returns to Lesotho

TENSION appeared to be returning to the tiny southern African state of Lesotho last night amid a stalemate in international efforts to scrutinise the outcome of the country's general election.

After a man was critically wounded on Sunday when he was shot by a policeman during a demonstration in the capital, Maseru, opposition leaders called for a work stoppage yesterday to be extended until the end of the week.

Two people were shot dead last week and several were wounded in violence linked to a sit-in outside the palace of King Letsie. Protesters want the king to annul the May 23 election, in which the Lesotho Congress of Democrats (LCD) won 79 of the 80 seats.

The protests were defused briefly when a foreign team began scrutinising the ballot. But, amid rumours that they had found irregularities, a Monsotho high court judge barred them from proceeding. — *Alex Duval Smith, Johannesburg.*

## Floods may worsen

Weather forecasters in Bangladesh saw little hope yesterday of respite from the floods that have swamped 70 per cent of the country.

The floods have so far claimed at least 730 lives and affected about 25 million people. The capital, Dhaka, has been virtually cut off after floods forced the suspension on Sunday of ferry services from Aricha to the country's north, and a key highway to the south has been closed for weeks. Officials said the situation could worsen before it improves.

Meanwhile swollen rivers in India rose further yesterday, posing new threats to millions of people as well as crops and wildlife, officials said. The death toll from floods and landslides has risen to 200 in the past four months. — *Reuters, Dhaka.*

## Silk road to reopen

OFFICIALS from 33 countries stretching from Belgium to Japan are due to meet in the Azeri capital, Baku, today to give a boost to a \$625 million project to recreate the historic Silk Road linking Europe with Asia.

The meeting is expected to result in customs and trade agreements between the project's members, who will also select a site for their headquarters. They can choose from the capitals of Georgia, Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan.

Worries about the effects of the Asian and Russian financial crises on the world economy and trade have cast a shadow over the one-day conference. — *Reuters, Baku.*

## Belgium mints the euro

KING Albert minted Belgium's first euro coins in Brussels yesterday as the country followed France and Germany on the latest stage towards a single currency.

Three billion Belgian euro coins will be produced at the Royal Mint before they hit the streets on January 1 2002. The coin features a uniform design showing a map of Europe. Each of the 11 countries already signed up to the euro is allowed to put its own symbols on the flip side. King Albert's head will therefore keep its place on Belgium's coins.

Germany, France, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Austria, Belgium, Finland, Portugal, Ireland and Luxembourg will officially adopt the euro as their common currency on January 1 1999.

For the first three years it will be used only for non-cash transactions, until euro coins and bills start filling the purses of 200 million Europeans on January 1 2002. — *AP, Brussels.*

A senior Iranian official is to visit next week, signalling warmer relations despite the Rushdie affair

## Britain gets closer to Iran

Iran Black Diplomatic Editor

LONG-FROZEN relations between Britain and Iran are thawing rapidly as fellow Europeans and the United States queue up to woo a regime only recently unshackled from a pariah.

Despite the unresolved Salman Rushdie affair, the Anglo-Iranian honeymoon is blossoming. A top Iranian foreign ministry official is due in London next week and a ground-breaking British ministerial visit to Tehran is possible later this year.

All Ahani is paying a return visit after John Shepherd, the third most senior diplomat in the Foreign Office, held discreet talks in

Tehran in July. Mr Ahani is the most senior Iranian official to come to Britain in a decade.

One immediate prospect is a meeting between Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, and his Iranian counterpart, Kamal Kharrazi, at the United Nations General Assembly later this month.

Britain wants to build on President Mohammed Khatami's positive attitude to the West and to encourage him in his struggle against hardline opponents. It is anxious not to be left behind in trade and investment, especially in the energy sector, by less reticent European competitors finally free of the threat of US sanctions.

Officials say that with the US now actively seeking improved ties after years of en-

my, Tony Blair wants Britain to follow suit.

Britain would like the Iranian regime to distance itself from the Rushdie fatwa. Tehran has given verbal assurances that no one will be sent to murder the author of the Satanic Verses, but insists

are lobbying for a public meeting between the novelist and the Prime Minister to underline the Government's commitment to his safety.

Derek Fatchett, the minister responsible for the Middle East, hopes to visit Tehran, though probably not in time

cultural activities by the British Council, which has been absent from Iran since the 1979 revolution.

In recent weeks Britain has renewed short-term insurance cover for exports to Iran and promised medium-term cover by the end of the year. Mr Fatchett gave a rare interview to the official Iranian news agency.

And the FO issued a strong condemnation of terrorism after the opposition mullahs claimed responsibility for assassinating the former head of the country's prisons' administration.

"This really illustrates the extent of the concessions his Foreign Office is making to appease the mullahs," a mullah spokesman said.

Italy and France have both sent senior ministers to Tehran, and Germany's foreign

minister, Klaus Kinkel, said he could envisage making a visit in the near future.

Last year Germany and all other EU members recalled their ambassadors from Tehran in protest when a German court ruled that senior Iranian leaders had ordered the 1982 killings of Kurdish dissidents in Beirut.

Since then improved ties with the West have been made possible by Tehran's dislike of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, its helpful role in central Asia and the Gulf, and its less militant stance on the Arab-Israeli peace process.

President Khatami and his supporters are said to have distanced themselves from state terrorism, but concern about the country's long-term nuclear ambitions remains.

With the US actively seeking improved ties with Iran after years of enmity, Tony Blair wants Britain to follow suit

that the edict cannot be annulled. One possibility is for the government to call for the bounty offered by a religious foundation to be dropped.

"They know what we want," a senior FO source said.

Mr Rushdie's supporters

for the city's international trade fair in October.

Given public progress on Mr Rushdie, diplomatic relations could be upgraded to ambassadorial level. Plans are under way to expand the British mission and revive



Eddie Fenech Adami (centre), Malta's new prime minister, is mobbed by exuberant Nationalist Party supporters as he arrives at the Castille Palace in Valletta yesterday to resume the office he lost two years ago. PHOTOGRAPH: DARRIN ZAMMIT LUPU

## Thousands flock to greet winner of Maltese poll

John Hooper in Valletta

THOUSANDS poured into the Maltese capital Valletta yesterday for belated celebrations to mark the Nationalist Party's crushing general election victory.

The party leader, Eddie Fenech Adami, a 64-year-old lawyer, was sworn in as prime minister while his supporters indulged in an orgy of what the Maltese call "car-cading".

Squashed into cars or crammed on to lorries, they waved red, white and black Nationalist standards as horns sounded incessantly and fireworks and rockets exploded around the Grand Harbour.

Shops and businesses stayed closed for fear of the post-election violence which has marred the aftermath of some previous polls in a country where politics are followed passionately.

The final results of Saturday's snap election showed the Nationalists took 52 per cent of the vote and the Malta Labour Party (MLP), led by Alfred Sant, 47 per cent.

Though the precise allocation of seats has yet to be determined by the dauntingly complex electoral system, Mr Fenech Adami predicted that he would have a five-seat majority — huge by the standards of a country with a 65-seat legislature.

While counting was still in progress on Sunday, the new prime minister committed himself to reviving Malta's application for membership of the European Union, which was frozen by Labour cabinet ministers had already resigned.

"The first thing that I am

going to do is to inform the EU that the Maltese people want membership," said Mr Fenech Adami, who was ousted from power two years ago after a nine-year spell in office. His party has promised to put the outcome of its negotiations to a referendum.

The election was called three years early after Malta's veteran former prime minister Dom Mintoff joined the Nationalists in a vote of no confidence in Dr Sant's ministry.

The two men had been at loggerheads for weeks over a plan for the redevelopment of the Cottonera area of the Grand Harbour which Mr Mintoff claimed endangered Malta's national security.

The Nationalist majority of 13,000 votes was the same as that won by the MLP in the 1996 election, meaning that almost 10 per cent of the island's 270,000 electors switched their allegiance. The swing was evidence of profound concern at the direction taken under Dr Sant's "New Labour" leadership.

Last November he enraged many of his party's natural supporters in the poorest sections of the community by imposing huge rises in the price of water and electricity. Mr Fenech Adami promised after being sworn in that he would reduce the tariffs.

Dr Sant, a physicist-turned-diplomat with an MBA from Harvard, also drew criticism for his coldly intellectual style of leadership and the rigorous discipline he imposed on his party. By the time the 82-year-old Mr Mintoff staged his rebellion, two Labour cabinet ministers had already resigned.

## Abubakar begins Nigerian glasnost

Patrick Smith in Abuja

OPENING the doors of the Nigerian presidency to the international press for the first time in four years, General Abdulsalam Abubakar said yesterday he would not allow any repeat of the human rights abuses committed by the previous regime.

Gen Abubakar showed during a two-hour press conference that he is as adept at public relations as his predecessor, the late Sani Abacha, was deficient.

Although most of the questions were about corruption and human rights abuses, Gen Abubakar handled them head on, saying he welcomed "constructive criticism".

Gen Abubakar said the 19 activists from Ogoniland arrested after the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa, and eight others arrested in 1995, would have their cases heard in civil courts and not by the tribunal that convicted Saro-Wiwa.

But he voiced concern at the disruptions in Nigeria's oil-producing areas which have shut down almost half the country's oil production of 2 million barrels a day.

Alongside a thorough reorganisation of the state-owned Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, Gen Abubakar said, the oil-producing areas would be given financial aid to improve living standards.

An independent commission will be set up to monitor and regulate the oil sector to make it "more effective and responsive to the needs of the

Nigerian economy". Under the Abacha regime, several billion dollars of oil revenues went unaccounted for.

Referring to press reports that the former national security adviser Ismaila Gwarzo had withdrawn \$1.45 billion (£200 million) from the central bank on Abacha's orders, Gen Abubakar confirmed that "routine audit and investigations of various accounts in the office of the national security adviser and other government departments" were continuing, and some money had been returned.

Foreign governments were helping Nigerian officials to recover money stolen during the Abacha regime, he said. The governments — believed to include Britain, Switzerland, Brazil and Lebanon — will have to unravel a complex web of trust funds and hidden identities, said a government source.

The general was also questioned about allegations of torture and mistreatment of prisoners by security officers. Gen Abubakar said his government was "making changes", and added that any alleged victim was free to pursue the officer responsible through the civil courts.

In addition, all repressive decrees are being reviewed by the attorney-general.

The military would have no problem "subordinating itself to civil authority" after the country's scheduled handover to an elected government next May, Gen Abubakar said.

Patrick Smith is editor of *Africa Confidential*

## Congo rebels are sidelined at peace summit in Zimbabwe

Andrew Meldrum in Victoria Falls

ALL-PARTY talks on ending the Congo war began in Zimbabwe late yesterday afternoon, attended by seven African heads of state.

The summit was called by President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, who has sent aircraft and 3,000 troops to the Congo to defend the government of President Laurent Kabila from rebel forces.

The two presidents were joined in Victoria Falls by presidents Sam Nujoma of Namibia and Jose Eduardo dos Santos of Angola, whose troops are also supporting Mr Kabila. On the other side are the presidents of Uganda and Rwanda, who are supporting the opposition to Mr Kabila.

The rebels said they would not attend the talks because Zimbabwe is not neutral. As a compromise the talks are being chaired by the Zambian president, Frederick Chiluba, who has not taken sides.

The presidents all arrived in Victoria Falls on Sunday night and began talking yesterday morning. The rebels did not arrive until late in the afternoon.

Unlike the red-carpet treatment given the presidents, they had to go through standard customs and immigration procedures, and then had to telephone for transport to the Intercontinental Hotel, where the conference is taking place.

At the hotel, the rebel spokesman, Arthur Zahidi



Kabila, pictured at the talks yesterday, was accused of lacking respect for democracy. PHOTOGRAPH: ODD ANDERSEN

N'Goma, complained to Reuters news agency that his delegation was being sidelined in a remote room without even a telephone.

"The point of us coming here was that we should be at the table," he said.

"We are here and we are ready to talk. But there will be no ceasefire before political negotiations and the de-

parture of the troops from Angola, Zimbabwe and Namibia."

Also in the six-member rebel delegation was Bizima Kabila, Mr Kabila's former foreign minister, who defected to the rebel side in August, complaining of the Congo leader's lack of respect for democracy.

The rebels may talk tough, but it seems that the presidents from both sides have already discussed the issues at length and may have reached general agreement. The rebels, dependent on their foreign backers, may have to go along with the agreement whether they like it or not.

The talks are expected to achieve a ceasefire and the return of prisoners from both sides. This is especially important for Uganda and Rwanda, which reportedly had large numbers of their troops captured in western Congo.

The next issue will be the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Congo. The last but most difficult question is how to resolve the country's internal problems. The South African president, Nelson Mandela, has called for quick multi-party elections and the formation of a government of national unity to help the former Zaire achieve stability.

Mr Mandela, current chairman of the Southern African Development Community, which has tried repeatedly to negotiate a Congo settlement, was not invited to the summit.

Hutu rebels in Rwanda killed 21 civilians and wounded 19 others at Ntaro village, in Kibuye province, as they retreated after storming a prison in the west of the country last Friday, the army said yesterday.

Commander Abdul Kaberuka said 70 of the 800 rebels involved were killed by government soldiers. About 210 freed prisoners were still at large.

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# Bitter fruit of the rouble's collapse

**Tom Whitehouse** in Moscow reports on the return of food queues reminiscent of the Soviet era, as importers refuse to spend their remaining hard currency and foreign firms shun trade in roubles

MOST of Russia's former vassal states are represented on Elshan's roadside food stall in central Moscow. There are tomatoes and aubergines from his native Azerbaijan, melons from Uzbekistan, walnuts from Kyrgyzstan and peaches from Moldova. And from Russia?

"Russia has rich soil but produces nothing because nobody wants to work and everyone steals from each other," said Elshan. "These potatoes are Russian, but look, they're rotting already."

Russia's financial collapse has cruelly exposed its failing agriculture.

Imported non-perishable goods — such as vegetable oil, pasta and salt — make up between 80 and 85 per cent of

the food products sold in Russia, and up to 85 per cent of those in Moscow. They have been the first to disappear from the shelves as people start hoarding for winter. There is no immediate prospect of them being replaced.

Russian companies have stopped buying food abroad. With the rouble still tumbling, it is more profitable to keep any hard currency they did not lose in the banks, rather than spend it.

Meanwhile foreign exporters are cancelling food deliveries because they will not accept payment in roubles.

Now, even the succulent fruits of the former Soviet Union are in short supply.

"Farmers in Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan do not want to sell their produce for roubles any more, because roubles are

worthless," said Elshan. "But as long as Russians don't mind eating rotten potatoes, they shouldn't starve."

The security council secretary, Alexander Kokoshin, tried to reassure people that there was "no danger of a famine" because, as well as the potatoes, there is 18 million tonnes of grain from last year's harvest still in stock.

But since it comes only a month after promises that the rouble would not be devalued, ordinary Russians are not convinced.

The harvest is down 42 per cent on last year. In the far east, the food situation is already officially described as "dangerous".

There are several reasons why the country's post-Soviet agriculture collapsed. Those trying to set up pri-

vate farms were strangled at birth by the government's failure to pass legislation privatising ownership of land.

The state farms that once assured Russia of a staple — if monotonous — diet are now stuck in a post-Soviet, pre-market limbo. Even if their workers were regularly paid or motivated, they would find it a struggle to produce food that Russians can buy.

The prices charged by emergency monopolies mean that state farms cannot com-

pete with European imports, which are subsidised by the European Union's taxpayers. The cost of rail transport is also prohibitive.

Smallholders working on leased plots can be cut out of the market by mafia groups, who control nearly all the big retail outlets.

"I have to pay off bandits just to stand here on the road," said Elshan. "If I didn't they would close me down."

Moscow's covered markets have evolved from haphazard

bazaars around the main railway stations to modern cornucopias with close circuit television and discreet — but effective — "security".

Like the Party shops of the Soviet era, they sell things that ordinary Russians only dream of. Genuine food markets can be found on motorways verges in and out of the main cities. Here, subsistence farmers working leased garden plots can sell their surplus. But you can only buy this food if you have a car.

Mindful of the effectiveness of food riots in Russian history, regional leaders are beginning to reintroduce official price controls.

In Saratov, on the Volga river, a system of fairs has been set up where growers can sell their produce without paying trading dues.

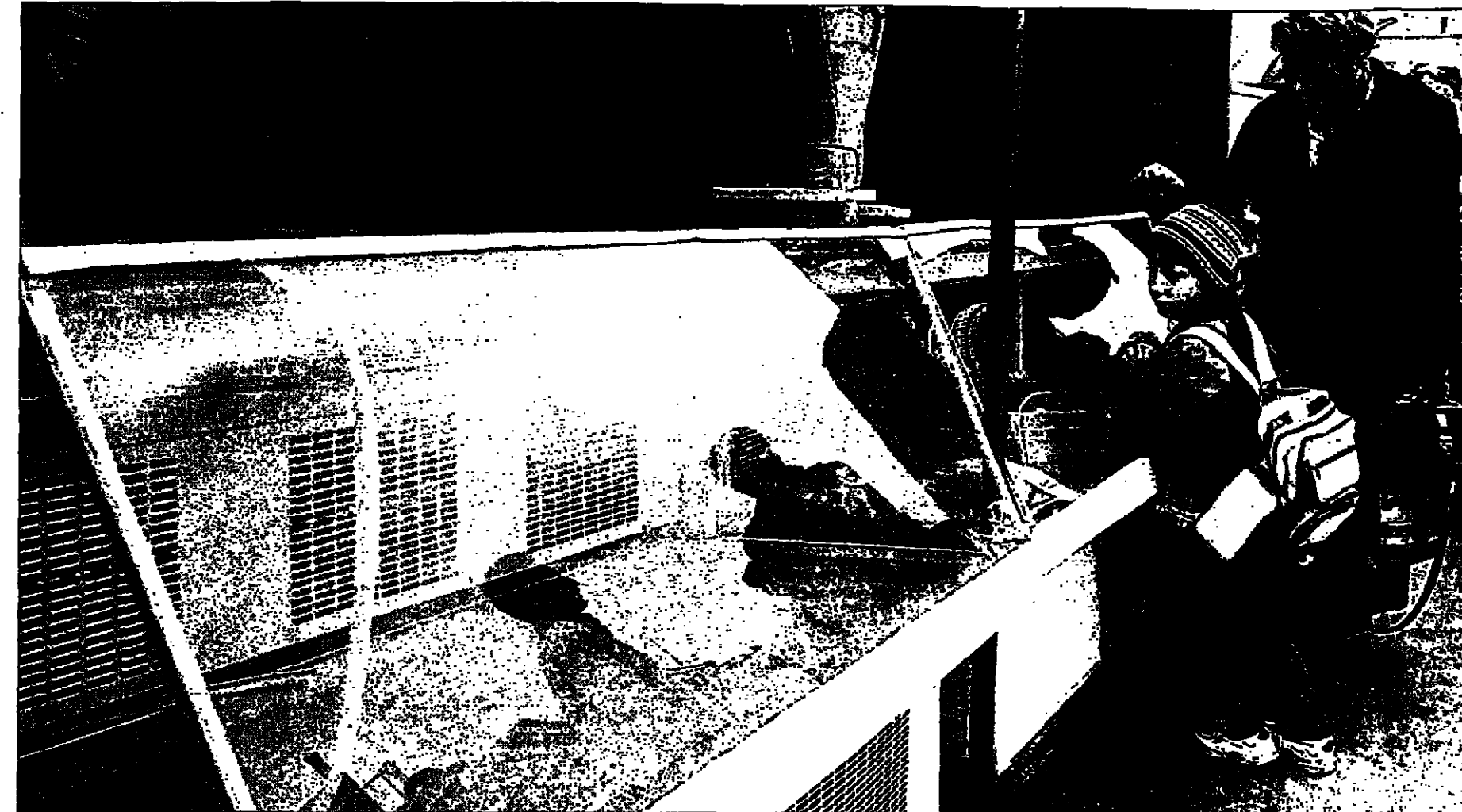
The authorities hope that the measure will control public anger by helping sellers to keep their prices down.

But food shortages also provide a pretext for the

revival of authoritarianism. "I will do my best to prevent a situation whereby a hungry crowd might take to the streets and destroy everything," said Alexander Lebed, governor of Krasnoyarsk.

"By declaring a halt in prices, I put myself on the brink of violation of the law. But the situation is demanding emergency measures."

Analysis, page 11  
Russia's banker pays price, page 12



An empty counter at a wholesale market in Moscow. Shelves have been stripped as shoppers, hit by the tumbling rouble, hoard for the winter

PHOTOGRAPH BY VIKTOR KOROTAYEV

## Nick Cumming-Bruce in Kuala Lumpur asks if the country is sinking into autocracy

# Struggle for Malaysia's soul

ANY time now, if the reports reaching Anwar Ibrahim yesterday were accurate, the Malaysian police will be knocking on the door of his home in Kuala Lumpur and taking him away to face a battery of charges that could put him behind bars for years.

Their arrival — and no one doubts it is only a matter of time — will be a reversal of fortune for the country's second most dominant politician, as starting to Malaysians as the plunge from boom to recession in what was one of the world's fastest-growing economies.

"It's really third-world dictator stuff," said a financial analyst, echoing the view of many better-educated professionals that the prime minister, Mahathir Mohamad, already South-east Asia's longest-serving leader after 17 years in office, is now replacing Indonesia's despotic President Suharto as one of the region's most autocratic.

They fear that this prosperous and once pluralist country, a member of the Commonwealth which is about to host its games and a recent state visit by the Queen has slipped into a murky authoritarianism in which the once-respected legislature, media and judiciary have been discredited as his puppets.

Until last week the personable 51-year-old Mr Anwar was the deputy prime minister and finance minister, a close ally of Dr Mahathir for nearly 20 years, long ago groomed to follow him as leader of this resource-rich country of 20 million people.

Critics questioned Mr Anwar's efficiency as a minister, and the country's ethnic Chinese never felt comfortable with his courtship of its Muslims. But his articulate promotion of moderate, liberal positions on social and religious issues earned him a reputation in the region as one of the brighter prospects

among Asia's next generation of leaders.

Last week, however, Dr Mahathir sacked him from all his government positions and secured his expulsion from Malaysia's dominant political party. He then left his erstwhile protégé squarely in the cross-hairs of a government campaign of vilification.

Soon afterwards the authorities cut off the electricity to his official residence and sealed it, along with his office.

Although Dr Mahathir has not explained why he has taken such action, police affidavits leaked to the press contain lurid allegations of 15 homosexual encounters — a criminal offence — and sex or attempted sex with various women supplied by a businessman friend.

As if that were not enough, the affidavits allege that he compromised state secrets and jeopardised national security, and the list of his offences appears to be growing by the day.

Mr Anwar struck back, declaring a political conspiracy at the highest level driven by vested cronies interests which felt threatened by his austere recipe for economic recovery.

"I have refrained from implicating Prime Minister Mahathir directly," he commented discreetly, "but all evidence, circumstances, events lead to at least him having full knowledge of what is happening."

Many Malaysians are less restrained. "He's just hanging on to power like a bloody leech," a retired armed forces officer said of Dr Mahathir from the garden of Mr Anwar's home, one of the hundreds of Malaysians who daily flock there to vent their indignation at his treatment.

By the way, he plans to travel to his parliamentary constituency in the northern island of Penang to begin a

national road show defending himself and attacking the government.

Even his advisers are unsure how much support he will gather in the rural areas from a passive population fed a diet of official propaganda that blanks out his — or any other opposition — analysis of events.

They also fear that the authorities will not tolerate the prospect of him courting popular opinion directly and that this may determine the timing of his arrest.

At the end of July the police arrested a close friend of Mr Anwar's, charging him under the Internal Security Act, which allows detention without trial. Mr Anwar says that on Sunday they arrested his adopted brother and took him away in handcuffs, and that inquiries have failed to establish where he is being held.

He has appealed to the authorities not to harass his family, friends and former staff but take him instead.

## Deal on PM eludes grey-haired men with a red past

James Meek in Moscow

NOT since the dying days of the Soviet po-

litburo had the red fortress walls of the Kremlin seen such a gathering of sombre, powerful, grey-haired old communists.

They sat around a single table yesterday in futile search of that elusive of Russian treasures — a compromise — as the country continued its dive to disaster.

Last night's second overwhelming rejection by the Duma of the prime minister-designate, Viktor Chernomyrdin, was a foregone conclusion after the bizarre Kremlin dialogue that had taken place earlier between President Boris Yeltsin and selected parliamentarians.

None of those in the last-ditch "round table" talks was strong enough to force a decision, but none was weak enough to yield to the other. They knew one of the men sitting in the room was Russia's future prime minister, but they could not find him.

Despite the Duma's devastating rejection of Mr Chernomyrdin last week, Mr Yeltsin insisted on putting him forward a second time. But, in a move which made the president's stubbornness look senseless, he suggested that they give the prime minister a shambled eight-month "trial run".

The behaviour of the Communist Party, whose leader, Gennady Zyuganov, was there at the table with Mr Yeltsin, was equally strange. Mr Zyuganov, who has led the opposition to Mr Chernomyrdin, has demanded that parliament, not the president, should be given the dominant role in forming a government.

His party is by far the largest in the Duma. Yet he has shied away from seeking the prime minister's chair for himself. His lacklustre performance in the presidential election against Mr Yeltsin in 1996, and his reluctance to actively recruit among the disaffected working class, have led most observers to conclude that he fears power.

If he wants anything, it is to be general secretary of the Communist Party of the USSR.

Mr Yeltsin, Mr Chernomyrdin, Mr Zyuganov and most of the other men sitting around the table share a common heritage. They were all senior members of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Their rivalries, their vocabulary, their outlook was

shaped by the same values. That may be why they find it so hard to yield a point to their rivals.

Grigory Yavlinsky, the head of the liberal Yabloko group, is the sole Duma party leader who has said he is ready to lead a government. But realistically, he seems to believe that only a man from the same middle-aged former communist club as Mr Yeltsin and Mr Zyuganov is capable of winning the political establishment's acceptance.

That was what lay behind his startling proposal yesterday that the veteran foreign minister Yevgeny Primakov, usually seen as his ideological opposite, should be nominated.

But the most likely source for an alternative to Mr Chernomyrdin is the ranks of powerful regional governors, the directly-elected provincial bosses who sit in the upper house of parliament.

Konstantin Titov, the respected governor of Samara and one of those Mr Yeltsin could turn to this week, said he believed that the president did not want to have a showdown with parliament which could end in dissolution.

"After today's meeting I have the impression that Mr Yeltsin is ready for further serious discussions," he said. In other words, a third attempt to push Mr Chernomyrdin through may be in the cards.

The name on everyone's lips as the most likely alternative is Yuri Luzhkov, the ambitious mayor of Moscow.

Mr Luzhkov has not publicly said he is ready for the job. It could harm his presidential ambitions in 2000, if as is more than likely, he falls victim to a crisis which is doomed to get worse before it gets better. But the fact that the communists have named him as one of their preferred prime ministerial choices, despite his avowed anti-communism, suggests he could be approved by the Duma.

Although the mayor has always been scrupulously loyal to Mr Yeltsin, he is a strong hands-on leader who would have little truck with presidential attempts to interfere with his work.

Moscow under Mr Luzhkov is a brighter, cleaner, more prosperous city, but opinion is divided whether this is because of or despite him.

There would be some alarm in the wider world at Mr Luzhkov's appointment, given his nationalist posturing, which includes demanding that Ukraine hand the Crimean port of Sevastopol back to Russia.

It is this very nationalism, however, which wins him the hearts of the communists. In a sign that he is preparing himself for the prime ministerial job, Mr Luzhkov has been one of the most outspoken critics of Mr Chernomyrdin's first few weeks as acting head of government.

"Decisions should have been taken immediately which would have halted the spread of the banking and financial crisis," he said yesterday. "Every day of inaction is another step closer to catastrophe."

Today's runners

Primakov: Communists suggested veteran foreign minister be given job

Luzhkov: The job could be a poisoned chalice for Moscow's ambitious mayor

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## WHO target draws veil over leprosy

Efforts to eliminate the disease by 2000 do not take into account undiscovered cases, reports John Gittings in Beijing

THE International Leprosy Congress opened yesterday in the Chinese capital with criticism of the WHO's goal of eliminating leprosy by 2000.

The WHO points to huge achievements since the beginning of the decade. Treatment with a cocktail of drugs known as MDT has reduced the estimated number of leprosy cases worldwide from 10-12 million in 1982 to 1.15 million last year.

But leprosy campaigners from non-governmental organisations complain that the WHO has "manipulated" data and moved the goalposts in order to claim success.

They agree that fixing the target was important in mobilising international funds and support, but fear that interest will fade if the WHO announces that the target has been reached. Financial backing already depends heavily on private donors, headed by the Tokyo-based Sasekawa Foundation.

By "elimination" the WHO means reducing the prevalence of leprosy to less than one case per 10,000 population. And by prevalence it means only cases which are being actively treated and are self-infectious.

Within a year, the number of registered cases is relatively low — it is now less than 90,000 worldwide. Yet the number of cases discovered each year is disproportionately high at nearly 700,000 in 1997.

Specialists suggest that this may be due to an incubation period of five to 10 years. But it could mean that there are many more unidentified sufferers than hitherto believed.

Professor Cairns Smith of the International Federation of Anti-leprosy Societies said yesterday that more effort must be made to locate cases in vulnerable communities.

These include nomads, those who are geographically isolated, those who lack basic health care, those who are refugees or suffering from war or famine, and urban dwellers.

The WHO admits that even by its restricted definition some countries may have to "continue and intensify" activities beyond the year 2000 to reach their elimination targets.

In China, the host country for the Congress, there are now only 4,000 cases under active treatment and fewer than 2,000 new cases. But the vice-minister of health, Yin Dakui, admitted that leprosy control was still difficult "in the remote, poor, mountainous and ethnic minority areas".

There are more than 300,000 people who have been cured in China, of whom 120,000 are disabled.

International leprosy workers argue that the "cured" should still be part of the WHO statistics. A specialist said: "Drugs cannot eliminate the persistent effect of nerve damage after the patient has become non-infectious. There are probably five to six million worldwide who still have disabilities such as foot ulcers."

Voluntary groups at the congress are lobbying hard for more involvement in anti-leprosy work by patients and former patients.

The IDEA organisation, which is based in the United States and runs work projects in several countries, including China, argues that sufferers should be encouraged to "overcome their sense of helplessness and shame by taking a pro-active role".

In a written presentation to the congress, the WHO said that if MDT treatment was maintained for the next five to 10 years, "all transmission of the disease can be terminally interrupted", although it concedes that this may take longer in India.

## Looking for the real Sam Rainsy

An opposition leader took refuge in a UN office in Phnom Penh yesterday after the government ordered his arrest for allegedly bombing the prime minister's home on Monday. Seth Mydans looks at the man who divides Cambodia

"R" said this," said Sam Rainsy. "A different point of view."

It was a pro-government newspaper with a front-page editorial declaring: "Sam Rainsy, the Machiavellian, maverick, opportunistic, selfish, foolish and irresponsible politician... must be prosecuted to the full extent of the law."

It is a familiar description of Sam Rainsy, aged 49. Not only the government but also many diplomats see him as a power-hungry egotist.

Yet he and his supporters see him as a democratic idealist who has "lost any illusion about working with rotten people in a rotten system."

He was clearly referring to the power structure of Hun Sen, who has led the country for most of the last two decades. "They pretend we have a market economy but it's a jungle economy," he said.

Six weeks after a parliamentary election in which his Sam Rainsy Party finished a poor third, he has paralysed the country with a vigorous campaign of protests and political manoeuvres which threaten to block the formation of a new government.

In Cambodian terms, his campaign is already something of a revolution: he is not using guns. Rather he is, some diplomats say, taunting Hun Sen's government to use its guns against him and his followers.

On March 30 1997 unknown assailants threw four grenades at a rally he was leading in a park, killing 16 people and wounding more than 100. Sam Rainsy blamed Hun Sen for the attack. The prime minister said Sam Rainsy himself was behind it. Now, for the last two weeks, Sam Rainsy has led thousands of people in a sit-in at the same park, which he has called Democracy Square.

Speaking of him and his wife, Samnara, one Western analyst said: "They see themselves as historical figures in a struggle for the future of Cambodia."

New York Times.



# Comment

## Diary

Matthew Norman

**A**ND so to new Book of the Month, All For Love, the 1988 classic by Express editor Rizia Rosie Boycott, bought by a reader for 30p after it was cruelly withdrawn from the local library. Set in 1930, Rosie's blockbuster concerns debutante Violet Harcourt, and presciently involves a newspaper magnate — a class of person with whom she has had many dealings in recent years. "Violet's passion is for the silver screen," the inside cover informs us, "until she becomes infatuated with James Franklin, heir to Australia's largest newspaper dynasty." But we get ahead of ourselves. Let us begin at the beginning, where we find a hint of pseudo-Archerian dynastic feuding as Violet meets James Franklin at Highgate Cemetery as his grandfather — once her own father's business partner — is being buried. "After a few moments," writes Rosie, "the Australian found he had stopped mentally undressing the girl and was looking only at her face." Easy party piece, then, and more tomorrow, when Violet and James meet again aboard the Cutty Sark at the Duke of Westminster's party.

**H**ALLELUJAH, Diary vicar Steve Chalke is safe. When Rev Steve last week failed to return a call, fears grew for the man who, in his own term, "most coherently defines the zeitgeist". However, the Baptist minister's office rings to snare all fears. The Rev is in India, visiting projects for sick children and AIDS centres connected with his own Oasis Trust, and will call on his return. Praise be.

**S**AY what you will about Helen Britton, she doesn't make it easy. With the Save our Brinton campaign, designed to prevent the airport from being dropped in Peterborough, in its infancy, she features in a Sunday headline: "Police called to 3am rumpus at sexy MP's flat". Oh God. "Officers," the People relates, "said there had been reports of shouting, screaming and slammed doors." Thankfully, after interviewing her, they decided to take no action. However, environmental health officers are apparently "continuing their investigations". Helen, we can help you and we will help you — but you have to meet us halfway.

**A**S a voluble advocate for road safety, Helen will be distressed by news of Mandy Mandelson, the lithe and lissom Trade Secretary. At 7.30 pm on Sunday, Mandy was spotted pedalling his bike along Westbourne Park Grove, west London, with his sweater tautly knotted around his waist — but without any lights! When we're in the Catnet, Mandy, we must set an example.

**I**T is murder that concerns Boris the Jackal Johnson as he furrows the crime novelist Rachel Billington. "I ought to declare," writes the Telegraph enforcer, "that I am Rachel Billington's admiring godson... Any suggestion of nepotism I confidently brush aside, and anyone who makes it can expect a slap in the mart." Mm. "The Big Guy ain't here," says a voice not unlike Joe Foweraker when we call. Ah, well, we were just wondering if the Jackal was planning to interview any other of his intimate circle in the weeks ahead... his children, perhaps, or his old nanny, or even another of his godmothers, wise guy. If it was you, it'd be god-fathers I'd be worryin' about, 'cos you ain't showin' much respect... and the Big Guy, he likes respect. Capish? Now run along, and go play with the traffic."

**T**HERE is concern at the Telegraph that commercial sponsorship has infiltrated the paper's thought for the day. "Wash away all my iniquity," read the biblical quote one day last week, "and cleanse me from my skin." Has the Body Shop brought out its own version of Psalm 51? Or is it one of those types from which the Guardian, alone of newspapers, never suffers?



## Murdoch's victim is not football. What is lost is honest news

Hugo Young



**I**T IS typical of the British enthrallment to Rupert Murdoch that the first squeak of protest any minister dares to make against him concerns the future of a football team. Buying Man U will be the least of Murdoch's threats to British life.

The two entities, given where they've come from and where they're going to, are a perfect fit. Straining at this great, Tony Banks and his fellow sentimentalists about the national game seem oblivious of the poisoned camel the country has already been obliged to swallow through Murdoch's other activities ever since he came here.

Soccer sold out six years ago to the trend Murdoch personalities. The merger between them is merely the logical climax of the rapacious commercialism on which the future of both is staked. Of Murdoch, you might expect this more than of Man U. Every particle of his activity as a capitalist is devoted to greed's satisfaction. There's more to soccer than greed, but in 1992, when the Premier League left the broadcasters and sold itself to narrow-casting Sky, top football declared its priorities. After pricing a lot of fans off the terraces, it would now price them out of their own armchairs. In the interest of the owners and not of what was laughably known as the game.

Man U, unless Murdoch was careful, might weaken Sky by launching its own television channel. Other big clubs might go the same, American way. They, rather than he, might also shape the future of European club football. How very much simpler for them all to be in it together, and how empty sound the complaints that the fans will really care.

Murdoch may have been extremely bad for most of the sports he's touched. Rugby and cricket are just two examples which show that massive television money is a snare and delusion, assisting at the ruinous alteration of games that television now controls as a rabid sports buff. I watch golf as a rare professional sport that hasn't been devoured. But big soccer in general, and Man U in particular, already the creature of Mammon, will surely be immune. The fans will bleat, and Sports Minister Banks says something must be done. But in the end what counts for the fans is not the owner but the victor. As an executive of the Fox Sports Net, Murdoch's baseball arm, once put it, the people don't care about the network, "but they're out-of-their-minds loyal to their teams".

All this, however obnoxious to many people, is so inevitable — and, in the end, so congruent with modernity — that objections to it are likely to be a waste of hot air: gratifying, but ultimately void. It is just as plausible that the Office of Fair Trading, if wheeled into the arena, will challenge the Premiership's attempt to stop a Euro-league, as that it will push the Trade Secretary to stop a merger for which the ground has been well prepared. But that isn't the end of the story. This new feeding of Murdoch's insatiable greed should have another effect.

Though leaving the Government without obvious means to stop it, it sharpens the question to ministers about how they propose to address Murdoch in other, more crucial, fields. How do they really see him: as a friend to cherish, or an enemy of the public interest? As an irritant ally to be feared and humoured, or a mogul of such monstrous reach that austere detachment is the only relationship a democratic leader can afford to offer him? The Government is not without choices to make or levers to pull.

Sons of these require international networking that surpasses his own, something governments should be good at. According to the Washington Post, News Corp last year paid only \$103 million in taxes worldwide, on an operating profit of \$1.32 billion. It manipulated for itself, in other words, a tax rate of 7.8 per cent, about one-third of what other big US media groups paid. This is a grotesque perversion, which Britain, along with others, has devoted nothing like the necessary political energy to attacking.

**T**ONY Blair should ask whether his availability to Murdoch isn't becoming an embarrassment. Even if there turns out to be no valid OFT case against the Man U sale, the social and professional entanglements between the Labour high command and the Murdoch minions will compromise the credibility of such a decision. Mr Blair may judge himself to be miles ahead of improper influence, but when regulation is the issue, Murdoch's very presence looms over politicians he thinks he can make or break, contaminate even the most defensible outcome. His power draws politicians to him, but is precisely what should demand of them the self-denying ordinance that ministers refuse to swear.

His propensity to bow down before him, to make calls on his behalf, to settle their European agenda through fear of his, reveals the hold he has. In this sense, he has already been deeply corrupting of the process. The only power in a position to stand up to him shows a regrettable reluctance to offend him in the smallest detail. There's a bigger man than democratic politicians tramping through the land, and if the Man U case is a populist wake-up call to that effect, it will serve a purpose. By extending yet further his ownership of what the British hold dear, it reminds them that the only ministers worth supporting are those who, if they cannot stop him, vow to entertain him with the longest spoon, treating his power not as a lure but a repellent.

Others, too, should be woken up. Manchester United, if he gets the club, will take its place on the lengthening list of subjects where his papers have taken their own self-denying ordinance against the truth. The exclusion zone is already formidable. Two large semi-continent, China and western Europe, are already off-limits to free journalism in the Murdoch press. Industries, from arms to airlines, need special care. Murdoch news about all Fox films and a plethora of television stations has to be read with due awareness of the commercial interest behind the words. Welcome, Man U, which, with all its competitive radiations and cross-conflicted television, may stand for football itself. It's not that editors won't sometimes print the truth, just that Murdoch makes it impossible for the reader to rely on that being the object of the exercise. Often it won't be, as the conglomerate hand feels the writer's collar. Galvanised by Man U, it's not football we should be lamenting.

## The end of money

John Gray



**B**ILL Clinton and Tony Blair are insisting that Russia and Asia press on with market reform. They have not understood that economic meltdown in these countries is chiefly a result of anarchy in global markets. Their incomprehension bodes ill for the world, and for their own political futures.

Russia is undergoing its second economic collapse in less than a decade. Since Yeltsin's market reforms began in 1991, production has halved. At least a half of what remains occurs in a barter economy. Tens of millions of people scarcely use money at all. Much of the population, including that in cities, survives only by growing its own food. After years of "economic modernisation", driven on by relentless pressure from the West, Russia has been reduced to a largely pre-modern, subsistence economy.

Russian agriculture and manufacturing cannot be rescued from collapse without protection from world markets and curbs on the mobility of capital. By vetoing such measures, the West has made a second change of regime in Russia more likely, and ensured that any government that emerges from the current shadow-play in the Kremlin will be one in which anti-western parties occupy a pivotal position.

By comparison with deepening deflation in Japan, Russia's collapse is — economically speaking — insignificant. Yet Western policies towards Japan have been bungling and hubristic. Japan has been told it must fight deflation by adopting Keynesian policies. But cutting taxes and increasing public spending will not kick-start the Japanese economy. It will merely increase savings and the flow of money abroad.

**W**ESTERN governments have not noticed that, when interest rates are near rock bottom, confidence has evaporated and capital is free to move anywhere in the world, such policies have as much effect — as Keynes himself put it — as pushing on a piece of string. Under Western pressure, Japan has given up many of the controls it had on the economy. It may now have no alternative to engineering an inflation.

On the surface, China's economy looks in healthier shape than Japan's. Protected by its consistent, well-founded contempt for western advice, the Chinese government has retained control of the commanding heights. By spurning the West's demands for eco-

nomic liberalisation it has been able to insulate the country from the worst effects of the depression that has struck its neighbours. Despite that, deflation is gaining hold. China's government will do anything it can to stave off spiralling unemployment and prevent the country following Indonesia and Russia into political chaos. Sooner or later, it will be forced to devalue the currency. At that point, if not before, the yen is likely also to go into free-fall.

All the conditions are already in place for a Thirties-style competitive devaluation in east Asia and, as a consequence, for a revival of American protectionism. There can be little doubt how Congress will respond to the prospect of a flood of cheap Asian imports. In turn, trade war between the United States and Russia's gyrations into a collapse. Yet a Congressional tilt to protectionism is only one of a number of developments that could have that effect.

Financial crisis in Brazil or Argentina; devaluation in China; more bank failures in Japan and the repatriation of some Japanese financial assets, further tremors in the Kremlin; a sudden resignation by President Clinton. As public and political support are rapidly whittled away by Western anxiety about the economy, one or more of these possibilities, along with others that cannot be foreseen, could trigger panic among the 100 million US private investors who have placed an unprecedented portion of their wealth in the stock market. It is becoming fashionable to talk of a re-run of the Great Crash of 1929-32, when the American market fell by 90 per cent and a global depression ensued. In fact, the scale and depth of the American people's exposure to the stock market is greater now than at

## Falling house prices would savage the voters' wealth

that time — or any other. As a result, a fall in the market considerably smaller than that which occurred between 1929-32 could have a larger economic impact. A sustained slide on Wall Street will not be a market correction but a signal for a major dislocation of the world economy. In that event, the American public will recoil from the free-market policies the US has attempted to impose throughout the world, and America's short-lived experiment in imperial *laissez-faire* will come to an abrupt close.

A worldwide slump would be a test to destruction for Labour. Shrinking pensions and falling house prices would savage the wealth of its most vital constituency — the voters who supported it for the first time in May 1997.

False Dawn: The Delusions of Global Capitalism by John Gray, is published by Granta.

Unreported in the small hours, the genuine experts in the Lords turned up their noses at Blair's Terror Bill last week — but then nodded it through

## Democracy at work

Andrew Roth

**T**HERE were twelve hours of virtually unreported overnight debate in the Lords last week on the "emergency" Terror Bill, now law. What was said by those peers was remarkable.

Lord (Patrick) Mayhew, Attorney General before becoming John Major's Northern Ireland Secretary 1992-97, insisted: "We are invited to make law which may turn out to be dangerous and therefore bad law, and for a purpose which will not be achieved in practice... People ought not to be convicted on hearsay evidence backed by straws in the wind."

"A judge could prefer the evidence of a senior police officer simply because he was a senior police officer. That would be human, but not exactly judicial." He

preferred to reinstate the power to intern.

Lord Bridge of Harwich, the judge who put away the Birmingham Six for 16 years, until the convictions were overturned, said: "Perhaps that makes me unduly sensitive about the possibility of miscarriages of justice... I retain a sense of unease about the provision in the Bill that would make the opinion of a senior police officer, that a man charged with membership of a prescribed organisation, is such a member admissible in evidence."

The Law Lord who overturned the Birmingham Six convictions, Lord Lloyd of Berwick, Chairman of the Security Commission, who produced a report in 1986 on anti-terrorist measures at the request of the then Home Secretary, Michael Howard, said: "I just do not see how it could work. A

police officer's opinion is worth only what his sources will support. If he simply says, 'That is my opinion', at the bar, nothing in a court of law. "No judge in Northern Ireland — no judge anywhere in the world — will be convinced beyond reasonable doubt on the say-so of a policeman... that is why I say that there will not be any convictions as a result." This ridicule was strongly supported by Liberal Democrat peers Home, Russell, Wallace, Thomas of Gresford and Lord Avebury, voice of Amnesty International, who predicted the legislation would be overturned in the European Court.

Lord (Peter) Archer of Sandwell, Labour's own former Solicitor General 1974-79 and Chairman of the British Section of Amnesty 1971-74, derided the legislation as a "charade".

New peer Baroness (Helen) Kennedy, who appeared in many of the leading Irish cases during her 15 years at the Bar, warned: "To change the rules [of evidence] because we are dealing with people we abhor is to corrode the system for us all."

**A**LTHOUGH referred to delicately as "a present to offer to President Clinton when he arrives in Belfast" (Lord Hylton), there was widespread fury at the piggy-backing of clauses aimed at international terrorists, fraudsters and drug-runners onto the Bill. Ministers half-admitted they were trying to appease Washington by saying ten times as many people had been killed in the Nairobi bombing of the US embassy as in Omagh.

The clauses were difficult to defend because they



were hastily and clumsily adapted from Tory MP Nigel Waterson's 1996 Private Member's Bill against international terrorists. That had the backing of both frontbenches but fell because the Tory Whips could not round up a quorum. In response to the anti-US bombings, the Home Office broadened the international conspiracy clauses to apply to drug dealers and fraudsters. But they narrowed its impact by requiring the Attorney General's authority to prosecute.

Peer after peer attacked the clauses. Past support for the ANC was cited, with its "terrorist" attacks on electricity pylons. Peers also cited their past backing for Kurdish (Avebury), Sudanese (Avebury, Cox), and Kosovo insurgents. Lord Hylton mentioned his help for the breakaway dissidents of Ngoma-Karabakh, Trans-Dniestr, the

Chechens and Abkhazians. There was no mention of the role of Tory ex MP Winston Churchill in providing missiles for the Afghan rebels against Soviet occupation.

Labour's Lord Kennet, often a strong critic of Washington, recalled how the CIA's "terrorists" had laid mines in a Nicaraguan harbour in the 80s, sinking a British ship, Lord Desai, a British ship, Lord Desai, who spent August in Islamabad, warned that the international conspiracy clauses identified Britain with the US policies loathed by the Muslim world.

Despite such widespread and pointed opposition, because no one wanted to throw a spanner in the Irish peace process, the legislation was passed without a vote.

Andrew Roth's Parliamentary Profiles; the new A-D section, is published this week.









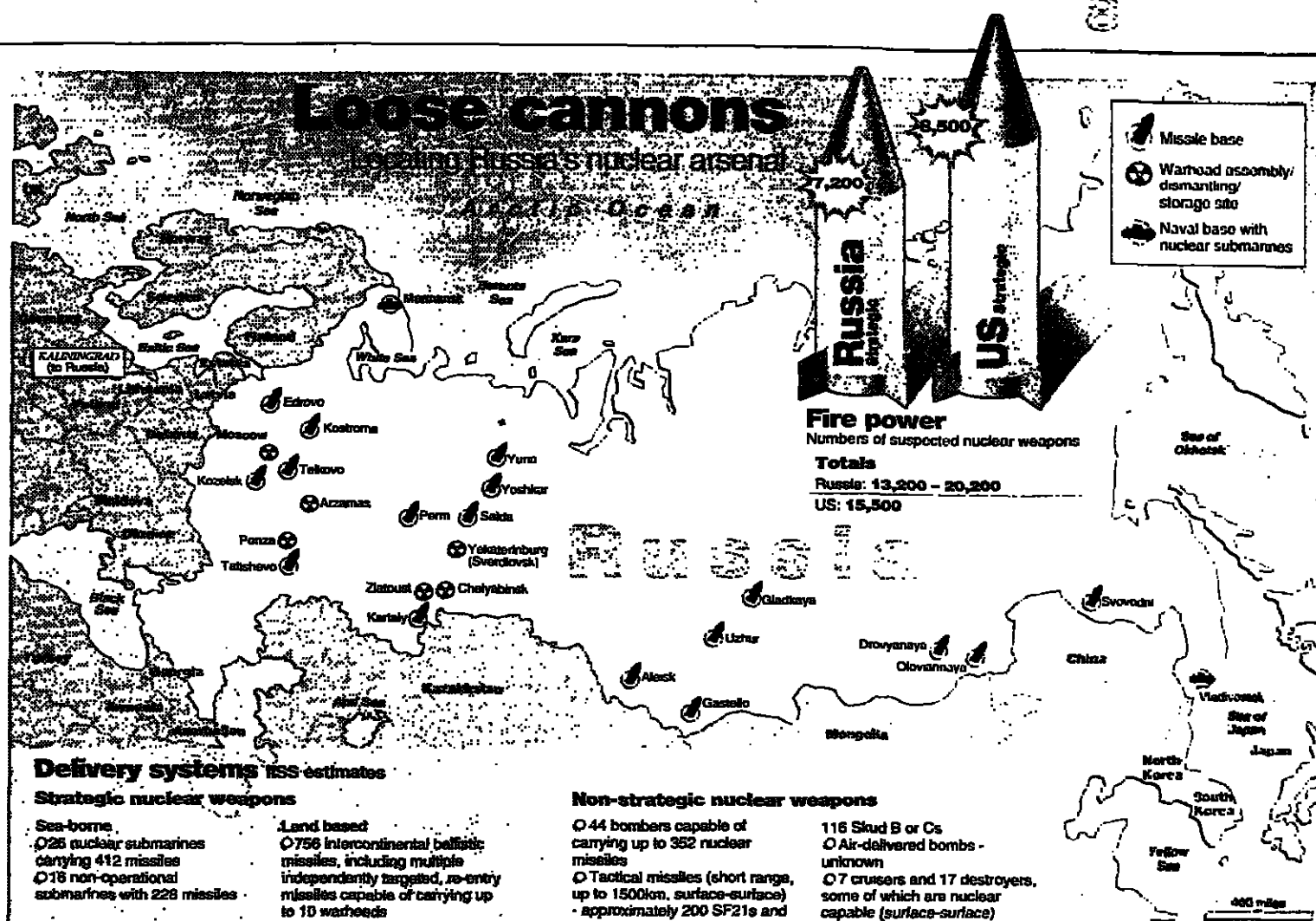


# Analysis Nuclear threat



Hugo Young  
on Manchester  
United

## Whose code on the firing pad, whose finger on the trigger?



When political chaos reigns in Moscow to whom do sub captains and missile engineers stay loyal and obedient? Computers fail, repairs aren't done and "command and control" is a moveable feast. Despite all that says **Richard Norton-Taylor** Russian nukes are safer than they look.

IN FEBRUARY last year workers at the Impuls Institute near St Petersburg responsible for maintaining the control systems of Russia's nuclear intercontinental ballistic missile system went on strike. They had not been paid for eight months and their equipment was deteriorating because of a lack of funds. Three days later, the Russian defence minister, Igor Rodionov, already angry about the state of his country's conventional forces, decided to have it out with the president, Boris Yeltsin. Falling to get in touch with him by phone — Yeltsin was ill — Rodionov wrote him a deeply disturbing letter. "If the shortage of funds persists... Russia may soon approach a threshold beyond which its missiles and nuclear systems become uncontrollable" (1).

On Wednesday last General Aleksandr Lebed, governor of the Krasnoyarsk region in Siberia said he had warned President Clinton that the situation in Russia was catastrophic. "The situation is worse than in 1917. Now we have huge stockpiles of poorly guarded nuclear weapons".

Exaggeration? Rodionov may simply have been seizing

an opportunity to summon political support for increases in Russia's defence budget. Lebed, an eye on the presidency for himself, was after headlines. He likes to shock — when he was visited by Western intelligence agents after claiming that nuclear material hidden in 100 suitcases had gone missing, he quickly backtracked. Yet governments and independent analysts in the West are increasingly worried. In 1994 Clinton and Yeltsin agreed to stop targeting strategic missiles at each other's country but the move was militarily insignificant: re-loading a computer-targeting system into a missile can be done in a matter of seconds. Besides, who controls Russia's nuclear arsenal? Yeltsin's grip on power is fast eroding, along with support from a demoralised military. Yet Russia, like the United Kingdom, still clings to a "launch on warning" strategy. "In the old days, the Soviets were very careful about command and control but we are in a wholly new ballgame", says Paul Rogers of Bradford University's School of Peace Studies. "The bottom line is we have never experienced a major nuclear power threatening to come apart".

At last week's Moscow summit Clinton and Yeltsin signed an agreement to share information on test-firing of missiles and launches of space vehicles launches. "This will reduce the possibility of nuclear war by mistake or accident", said Clinton. This, according to Robert Bell, Clinton's special assistant for national security affairs, was "especially relevant at a time when Russia's early warning system is under stress from budget difficulties, systems failures and the closure of early warning radars on the soil of nations outside Russia". Independent American experts were warning last year that only a third of Russia's modern early-warning radars were working at all, and at least two of the nine sites in its array of missile warning satellites were empty. In early 1996 there was a serious incident. Early on the morning of 25 January a Norwegian-American research team launched a large four-stage Black Brant XII rocket as part of a long-term programme to observe the Northern Lights. To avoid false alarms, such experiments were notified in advance to the Russian authorities, and the Norwegian foreign min-

istry had sent them a letter announcing the impending launch. Possibly as a result of the chaotic state of the Russian bureaucracy at the time, the message was not received by Russian radar crews (2). The Black Brant XII rocket was much larger than those used in previous experiments and its four stages resembled the multiple stages of an American submarine-launched Trident missile. Aware that a Trident missile launched off the north coast of Norway could scatter eight nuclear bombs over Moscow within 15 minutes, the radar operators immediately alerted their superiors. The message passed from Russia's command and control system, Kazbek, to Yeltsin who quickly contacted his top advisers on the telephone. For the first time, his "nuclear briefcase" was activated. The radar crews continued to track the missile. After about eight minutes — a few minutes short of the procedural deadline to respond to an impending nuclear attack — the trackers decided the missile was heading out to sea and was no threat to Russia after all (3). That sort of risk led to this week's agreement in Moscow. But the danger does not come only from mistakes or accidents. There is a widespread view that Russia's command and control system, rigidly formalised and hierarchical in the days of the Soviet Union, could fall apart. "A collapse of economic markets that leads to [a ruble] devaluation... could indeed lead to a chaos in which control of dangerous weapons and [nuclear] weapons material could be even less secure."

That's Graham Allison, an expert on Russia's nuclear weapons systems at Harvard University and a former Pentagon official (4). A strong supporter of the injection of more financial support for Russia, he said "I would be more frightened than they [the US defence secretary and chairman of the Joint Chiefs

of Staff] are about the extent of the meltdown of authority in the Russian military and security ministries. I think the description 'progressive degradation' of central nuclear command and control is correct. If we need a metaphor for it, it is the Mir space programme — which of course is a piece with their military programme — where computers fail, systems degrade, repairs are intermittent and in which it becomes more precarious".

Physical problems are essentially the result of Russia's financial crisis. They are compounded by the erosion of political control, and in particular the growing tensions between Yeltsin and the military exemplified by Lebed.

Formally, Russia's nuclear command and control system is secured through two different types of code which are constantly changed: an authenticating code and an enabling code. The authenticating code is designed to ensure that the president, the commander in chief, alone can order regional command centres on land and submarines at sea to launch an attack. To put it simply, the telephone rings, the military

commander knows it is the president on the line by the digital code he gives. The commanders then punch in enabling codes to activate their weapons systems. (The locking system of some, but by no means all, of these enabling codes have recently been strengthened with American technical help.)

HOWEVER, it has always been a myth that a single person — the president — is in control of the authenticity code. His authority is essentially nominal. Other people have access to it and can change it. This would happen anyway if Yeltsin were shot. There is no single, central transmitter from the Kremlin, Russia's political centre, to all military regional commands. The coded system could be infiltrated as it communicated to the commands via the Russian defence ministry. The issue is not one of access, or of central control. It is one of security.

It is also a question of loyalty. The enabling codes which unlock the weapons can be broken without the authenticating code from the central

(political control) system. And these enabling controls are held in regional command centres. "A lot of Russian weapons systems are not subject to direct physical control even formally they rely ultimately on loyalty and obedience to procedures", according to Shaun Gregory, an acknowledged authority on command and control systems at the Bradford School.

The Russian command and control system is more vulnerable to seizure of central power by the military, however unlikely this scenario has come to look. Meanwhile some of Russia's nuclear submarines are not subject to control by any enabling code system, nor are some of its shorter-range tactical nuclear weapons systems. This is not unique. Britain's Trident missile submarine commanders are also subject only to the authenticating code. But while in the Russian case, this is the result of wartime exigencies — with submarines and battlefield commanders assumed to be out of contact with regional command centres — in Britain it is based on the assumption that central political control will always be legitimate. Royal Navy

commanders have been affronted by any suggestion they would not automatically be loyal to the "authenticator" — i.e. the prime minister.

The possibility of genuine mistakes and accidental launches remains as long as the United States and Russia keep to their present military doctrines and as long as they possess so many nuclear weapons. American government officials, including Stansfield Turner, ex-director of the CIA, have suggested more radical moves. These include "de-alerting" and electronic "seals" that guarantee an essential component of a missile has not been replaced after removal. The ultimate goal must be to separate nuclear warheads from their missiles and then eliminate them. Credible verification procedures would be needed.

Such steps would be opposed by those who still fear a secretly-prepared surprise attack. Yet despite the vulnerability of Russia's nuclear command and control system, the possibility of rogue sections of the military planning to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons must be remote. What would be the point? A more realistic threat is the danger of demoralised, impoverished, Russian soldiers selling nuclear material to rogue regimes and environmental damage from degraded nuclear systems.

Sources (1) Taking Nuclear Weapons off Hair-Trigger Alert, Scientific American, November 1977; (2) Learning from the Cold War Confrontation, chapter for forthcoming book by Paul Rogers, Deconstructing the Cold War; (3) The tale is told in full in the Scientific American article; (4) Aviation Week and Space Technology, July 20, 1998. Graphics Sources: University of Bradford School of Peace Studies; Institute of Strategic Studies. Graphics: Paddy Allen. Research: Jane Crinion, Matthew Keating. Richard Norton-Taylor is the Guardian's security editor.



The angry minister, Igor Rodionov and the shocking general, Aleksandr Lebed

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# 4p a week on tax to lift debt burden

Larry Elliott  
Economics Editor

**A**ID agencies are to step up their pressure on the Government to act unilaterally to ease the burden on the world's poorest nations as new figures showed that writing off official debts to the UK would cost the average taxpayer less than 4p a week.

Using data supplied by the House of Commons Library, the Jubilee 2000 coalition said Britain "could easily afford to carry out a total cancellation of the debts owed to it by the poorest countries in the developing world".

Development agencies are calling on the UK — which has been at the forefront of attempts to speed up assistance to more impoverished nations — to take the lead in restoring momentum to the debt-cancellation programme.

They are concerned that a lack of political will and a concentration on the crisis in Asia has resulted in the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC) — launched two years ago by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund — being a missed opportunity.

Oxfam International said a Bank/Fund progress report into HIPC — being considered by the Bank today and by the Fund on Thursday — was a "whitewash".

It added that, without radical changes, the paper could "seriously damage the credibility of creditor governments, the World Bank and IMF".

Only one country — Uganda — has so far actually received debt relief as part of the HIPC process, although Bolivia will become the second by the end of this month.

Oxfam is arguing that the process should be speeded up — with the qualification period cut from six years to three, more resources provided, more realistic levels of

debt sustainability, and debt forgiveness linked to specific human development programmes.

A World Bank spokesman said that the paper being considered this week was a technical review of progress over the past two years, and that staff had not been asked to come up with a new blueprint for HIPC.

However, the document proposes that the eligibility data for the initiative should be extended until 2000 and that conditions for post-conflict countries should be eased.

Jubilee 2000 said that the bulk of the UK's official development country debt was owed to the Export Credit Guarantee Department, with a much smaller amount owed to the Department for International Development.

It concluded that the cost of forgiveness for 52 poor countries would be a maximum of £74 million a year — by comparison with Britain's national output of £742 billion.

"Any attempt to justify keeping such debts on the books and demanding payments from debtor governments on the grounds of cost is simply not credible," Jubilee 2000 said. "The cost of cancellation is likely to be about £1 to £2 per year for each taxpayer."

This view was supported by a research paper written by the Economic Policy and Statistics Section of the House of Commons Library.

It concluded: "There may be political reasons against the UK unilaterally cancelling bilateral debt."

"However, in terms of the effect on the Public Sector Net Cash Requirement, a programme of cancellation of all outstanding amounts due to the ECED from 26 HIPCs (regardless of whether the sums are payable or repayable) would account for a very small proportion of government receipts. The cost would seem to be generally affordable."

## Glimmer of hope in world markets

# Shares surge in London

Mark Milner  
Deputy Financial Editor

**L**ONDON'S stock market recorded its second highest points rise on record as share prices around the world were rallied by the prospect of lower US interest rates.

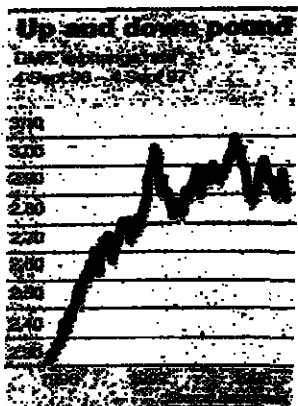
But on the foreign exchanges the pound slipped to its lowest level for three months against the German mark.

Global stock market sentiment was boosted by weekend comments from the US Federal Reserve chairman, Alan Greenspan, which hinted that lower borrowing costs were on the way. The growing consensus that UK interest rates have peaked and that they could be cut before the end of the year helped to push the pound below DM1.67.

Analysts will be looking to Wall Street, closed for a holiday yesterday, to endorse the more upbeat mood which prevailed on stock markets in both Europe and Asia. There is widespread scepticism that financial market turmoil is at an end.

"On the international scene, we want to see some more political stability in Russia as a prerequisite," Charterhouse Bank chief economist Richard Jeffrey said. "In Japan, we need to see a fiscal package with credibility that goes some way towards re-igniting consumer demand. We also need to have some reassurance from the situation in Latin America as well."

In London the FTSE followed the tone set by Asian markets — where Japan, Malaysia, Hong Kong and South Korea posted strong gains — and rose 180 points to 5347.



an increase of almost 3.5 per cent.

Analysts said that volume was light and, in an apparent indication of the fragility of the market's more upbeat approach, the BSE's bid for Manchester United was an

other factor cited as helping to boost sentiment.

Frankfurt put on an early sprint but fell back slightly by the close to leave the Dax index up 1.6 per cent on the day.

"Today it was a technical. After a lot of losses there's naturally a counter-reaction," one trader said. "It could continue for a few days. That's my scenario."

Dealers said Mr Greenspan's hint that US interest rates may fall was fueling bank shares which had suffered a battering in recent weeks.

Paris was among the weakest performers. An opening gain of nearly 2 per cent dwindled away to almost nothing. French traders said the rebound fuelled by Asian market strength looked technical and there was still good cause for market nerves.

Analysts were still wary that any US stocks rebound

## Fund managers see British stocks as undervalued

**F**UND managers have been buying UK stocks as a result of the recent falls in the stock market even though they are pessimistic about profit prospects for many companies, writes Jill Treanor. The monthly Merrill Lynch Global Survey also shows that

on Mr Greenspan's comments may not be long-lasting. Emerging markets, particularly Latin America, are still fragile.

"Clearly Latin America is on the verge of repeating the Asian and Eastern European

nearly all the 63 fund managers questioned believe interest rates will fall and none expect them to be higher in a year.

Only 3 per cent expect an uptick in economic growth, a view reflected in a dramatic move out of UK property last month.

"Most managers see the UK markets as undervalued and they have turned into strong buyers," said Trevor Greenham, global strategist at Merrill Lynch, which conducted the survey between August 28 and September 2.

experience. That is going to call into question quite how insulated the US economy and the dollar are from the emerging markets contagion," said Paul Maggs, senior currency economist at Deutsche Bank in London.



Flagging hopes... South Korean bank workers, whose jobs are at risk as the industry shrinks, demonstrate at a rally in Seoul yesterday.

PHOTOGRAPH: PAUL BARKER

## Airbus hope for 10,000 jobs

David Gow  
Industrial Editor

**T**HE proposed European super-jumbo would create 10,000 jobs in Britain, Airbus said yesterday. In its latest attack on US rival Boeing, the four-nation European consortium said the aircraft would capture a huge slice of a \$200 billion market.

Airbus, in which British Aerospace has a 20 per cent stake, also revealed plans for a new short-haul aircraft, the 100-seater A319, to take on Boeing's 737.

Airbus chief executive Noel Forgeard said the new 480 to 650-seat, double-decker jumbo, the A3XX, would be launched in late 1999 and enter service in 2004.

As well as creating 10,000 jobs in the UK, it will safeguard 40,000 British jobs, involving more than 400 companies. Derby-based Rolls-Royce hopes to build the engine.

BAA claimed the rival to Boeing's traditional 747 series would bring economic benefits for at least 40 years, including nearly £20 billion in net British exports.

Airbus reckons the market for the "Euro-jumbo" will be \$200 billion — a quarter of aerospace manufacturers' estimated turnover for 30 years.

"We can't let a market of this importance continue to be monopolised by our competitors," Mr Forgeard said. But the consortium's chief executive admitted that the total investment required to launch the plane would be US\$10 billion (£6.3 billion), \$2 billion more than originally estimated amid continuing doubts that the four partners can raise the sums or persuade their governments to offer up to a third of the capital in launch aid.

Airbus, which claims to have "nibbled" at Boeing's monopoly of larger aircraft through its wide-body jets, insists that super-jumbos are essential in future despite the world economic downturn and pending cyclical recession in aerospace. Airbus says it has the support of 20 airlines, including British Airways, in developing the A3XX.

Boeing, however, yesterday derided the project's viability. Bruce Denny, Boeing marketing vice-president, said: "If



The 1/20th scale model of the \$5 billion, double-decker Airbus A3XX unveiled yesterday

the market wants such a plane, we will offer a larger aircraft and with more variants. The A3XX could fly 10,000 miles.

Airbus, which announced a three per cent rise in prices, said its new A318 would be a shortened version of the 124-seat A319. It claims that these variants of the single-aisle A320 range, will help it out-sell Boeing's 727 soon.

Airbus dominated the opening day of the Farnborough International Air Show with an upbeat presentation of its prospects as it slowly moves to become a full-scale public company in mid-1999.

This contrasted sharply with an unusually defensive display by troubled Boeing whose faltering president, Harry Stonecipher, issued a remarkable mea culpa for the "difficult and disappointing" performance of the world's biggest aerospace company. He admitted that Boeing, which last year made losses for the first time in 30 years and sacked 26,000 employees, had been "too arrogant, too distracted or too self-satisfied".

Boeing yesterday confirmed plans by the Dutch airline, KLM, to buy four new 737-900s and by the International Lease Finance Corporation to order 17 new planes.

## Germans clear Dasa-Bae merger for take-off

David Gow  
Industrial Editor

**T**HE German government last night gave the green light for British Aerospace and Daimler-Benz Aerospace (Dasa) to merge in the face of growing impatience at the pace of European restructuring.

The French government has sought in effect to veto a fusion of Bae and Dasa, claiming that this would amount to unacceptable Anglo-German dominance of Airbus and the proposed European Aerospace and Defence Company.

However Günther Rexrodt, the German economics minister, said he was

dissatisfied with progress in turning Airbus into a stand-alone company.

"Therefore it is logical that discussions come up over different constellations, speeds and possibilities of coming together in the creation of this European firm," he said.

He was speaking after talks at Farnborough with trade and industry secretary Peter Mandelson and French and Spanish colleagues.

Jean-Claude Goyssot, the French transport minister, insisted that the planned partial privatisation of state-owned Aerospatiale had transformed the situation.

But Bae and Dasa say that this does not go far enough and have held talks about a possible merger.

Opening the international air show, the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, said it was "urgent and vital" that European restructuring went ahead swiftly.

## TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS

Australia 2.74	Germany 2.78	Malaysia 5.77	Singapore 2.53
Austria 12.55	Greece 42.42	Mexico 0.52	South Africa 10.03
Belgium 57.57	Hong Kong 12.56	Netherlands 3.13	Spain 235.87
Canada 2.465	India 71.35	New Zealand 3.18	Sweden 12.91
Cyprus 0.822	Ireland 1.104	Norway 12.85	Switzerland 2.00
Denmark 10.84	Israel 5.56	Portugal 203.89	Turkey 445.70
Finland 8.584	Italy 2.770	Saudi Arabia 6.14	USA 1.821
France 9.328			

Supplied by NatWest (excluding rupee, shilling and colonic)

## Rate hint triggers rare Asian rally

Jonathan Watts in Tokyo  
and Mark Milner

**A**SIA's beleaguered financial markets staged a rare rally yesterday, driven higher by hopes of lower US interest rates, curbs on speculators and a stronger Japanese yen.

Best performer was Malaysia where the main stock market index stormed more than 20 per cent higher, though there were reports the move had been boosted by government intervention.

In Japan, the yen climbed once again against the dollar, reaching a four-month high of 131.52 against the US currency by late afternoon, helping Japan's Nikkei 225 to gain 5.32 per cent. Weekend comments by the Federal Reserve chairman Alan Greenspan, which were interpreted as a signal that US interest rates could soon be cut, spurred the yen's advance.

Hong Kong's benchmark Hang Seng index ended at a six-week high, finishing up 58.39 points, or 7.9 per cent, at 8076.76 while the Singapore stock market put on its best performance for the year, scoring a 7 per cent rise.

In Hong Kong, investors were encouraged by the easing of interest rates that followed the government's announcement on Saturday of

measures to ease the credit crunch, which is hurting local firms.

In a sign of how the recent market chaos has shaken free-market ideologues, investors also gave a cautious welcome to the administration's decision to tighten stock exchange regulations, a move designed to deter attacks on the local markets.

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## News in brief

### North Sea oil tax reform scrapped

**T**HE Government ended 12 months of dithering over North Sea oil tax reform yesterday by shelving plans which had sent shock waves through the offshore industry and threatened to become a political problem for Labour in Scotland.

The change of heart comes at a time of depressed crude prices and fears that oil companies would steer clear of the 18th offshore licensing round which closes on Friday.

In March the Treasury had put forward two alternatives to the present system under which developers of new fields pay corporation tax at 30 per cent. One involved the imposition of a supplementary corporation tax. The other was the reintroduction of a profits based petroleum tax abolished for new fields.

The oil industry gave the Treasury nearly £4bn in revenues last year. Yesterday it was jubilant that reform proposals had been scrapped with signs that the oil price could be finally bottoming out from a level of \$12 a barrel. — *Terry Macalister*

### Timeshare duo jailed

**T**WO brothers were jailed yesterday for a time-share fraud. Roger Stead, a former justice of the peace, received a three-year jail sentence, with another concurrent for two years, after pleading guilty to one count of fraudulent trading and one count of false accounting. His elder brother, Michael Stead, 54, received four years and two years concurrent, after pleading guilty to fraud and false accounting.

Their timeshare business, Villa Investment Plan, based in Stamford, Lincolnshire, went into voluntary liquidation with debts of more than £7 million in January 1995. — *Jill Treanor*

### FSA toughens guidelines

**T**HE Financial Services Authority, the City's new watchdog, has beefed up the responsibility of senior managers in new proposals for the key "principles" used to regulate financial services companies.

It will set a tougher requirement for "management and control", one of the major concerns raised by the collapse of Barings bank.

In total, the FSA published eight principles for financial firms, which include conducting their business with "integrity" and organising its affairs with "due skill, care and diligence". — *Jill Treanor*











## Tennis

## Teenager shows Graf the exit

Stephen Bierley at Flushing Meadows on a former champion's US Open defeat

SHE has given no hint that she is contemplating retirement, although she continues to insist that she enters each tournament "with no expectations whatsoever". But for the second Grand Slam event in succession since her comeback, Steffi Graf failed here.

The German's tournament victory in New Haven just prior to this US Open — when she defeated both Jana Novotna, the current world No. 2, and Lindsay Davenport, the No. 3 — had raised hopes that at 29 she might be on the point of re-emerging as a major force, but under the floodlights of Flushing Meadows she was unceremoniously cut down in the fourth round by Switzerland's Patty Schnyder.

In truth this was hardly a shock. Schnyder, currently ranked No. 10, is the most successful player on the women's circuit this year, having won five tournaments, and is fast stepping out of the shadow of her more illustrious compatriot Martina Hingis.

Graf was in trouble from the start against the 19-year-old left-hander, making unforced error after unforced error and eventually losing 6-3, 6-4. It made for unhappy watching, for nobody enjoys seeing a former champion playing like a novice.

Graf has won the US Open title five times, the last in 1996, but knee surgery last year saw her miss all the season after the French Open, and her return has been a stuttering affair. She survived two rounds at Wimbledon to Natasha Zvereva of Belarus, who in 18 previous meetings had never beaten her.

With Novotna winning Wimbledon for the first time this year at 29, there is no reason to suppose Graf is incapable of adding to her 21 Grand Slam titles provided the left knee holds up.

She has long been the supreme athlete, dancing around her vulnerable backhand to crack forehands of withering power. But against Schnyder she often appeared to lack the nerve to follow through, from which she has always suffered, brought on by her lack of match play. But the suspicion is that the knee has not fully recovered and that her career at the top is effectively over.

Whereas Graf's departure prompted sadness, nobody

shared a row of beams when Chile's Marcelo Rios, the men's second seed, was knocked out in the third round by Sweden's Magnus Larsson 6-1, 6-7, 2-6, 6-3, 6-2. Rios, one of the most gifted players on a men's circuit notably short of talent, remains infuriatingly inconsistent and, worse, rarely appears bothered when he loses.

When the pony-tailed Chilean reached the final of this year's Australian Open and then won the titles in Indian Wells, Key Biscayne and Rome this spring to briefly take the No. 1 ranking away from Pete Sampras, there seemed good reason to suppose he was truly about to make his mark at Grand Slam level. But he has slipped back and recently parted from his coach Larry Stefanki.

"I think it's not the end of the world losing this match," he said. In truth New York barely noticed.

However, it was good news for Tim Henman, as was the departure of the Dutchman Richard Krajicek, the fifth seed, whose knee problems flared up against another Swede, Thomas Johansson, forcing him to retire. Both Rios and Krajicek were in the British No. 1's half of the draw.

Henman's fourth-round opponent today is Australia's huge-serving Philip Pousis, who prior to Wimbledon was threatening to quit tennis. But a fresh haircut, and a fresh attitude, saw him reach the quarter-finals there, where he lost to Sampras, as did Henman one round later.

The two have met twice before, Henman defeating the 21-year-old Melbourne-born player 6-4, 6-2 in Sydney two years ago and then losing 7-6, 6-4 indoors in Basel last year. The Briton will fancy his chances of reaching the quarter-finals here, with Russia's Yevgeny Kafelnikov his likely opponent.



Graf... knee still a worry

## Lancashire lift their second trophy in two days



That winning feeling... tired, despite what it says on the shirt, but happy, Wasim Akram proudly holds the AXA League trophy after yesterday's victory

PHOTOGRAPH: BEN DUFFY

## AXA League: Lancashire v Hampshire

## Two down, one to go for Wasim's men

## Andy Wilson sees the Red Rose defy battle fatigue to set up a treble chance

WASIM AKRAM yesterday lifted Lancashire's second one-day trophy inside 30 hours after leading his side to a 16-run victory over Hampshire. Lancashire hope to win the County Championship as well, so perhaps the Monopoly and Marmite Commission should investigate recent developments at cricket's Old Trafford too.

Lancashire's storming end to the season is all the more commendable given the uncertainty over Wasim's future with the club. The committee are expected to announce today that they have signed Muthiah Muralitharan as their overseas player for next season, with John Crawley replacing Wasim as captain.

Yet Wasim appeared more determined than ever to complete a treble with Lancashire's first outright championship since 1934 — a dream he has cherished since joining them in 1988. "I would like to stay because I love this county," he said. "But if it would be nice to go out on a high."

For much of this game there appeared a real danger that Hampshire would win and keep Essex's title hopes alive at least until tomorrow, when Lancashire play a day-night match at Trent Bridge.

Lancashire should have scored considerably more than 200 and Hampshire were well-placed with 10 overs remaining, needing 74 with Robin Smith going well and eight wickets in hand.

But the bulk of a 5,425 crowd never lost faith, and with good reason. Glen Chappell, who failed to take a wicket in the weekend's NatWest final, had Smith

caught behind off the bottom edge, leaving Ian Austin, Peter Martin and Wasim to secure victory.

Lancashire have played music to greet boundaries and wickets at every AXA match this season and it has never been more incongruous than when a blast of Hallelujah greeted Martin's dismissal of Will Kendall with a full toss which Kendall thick-edged to Austin at third man.

However, it seemed more appropriate for a spectacular boundary catch by Chappell to send back Nixon McLean, and the 1812 Overture, followed by We Are The Champions, were predictable when victory had been sealed. Surprisingly, given Lancashire's reputation as limited-overs specialists, this was their first title in what used to be the Sunday League since 1989 and only their fourth in all.

For much of the afternoon their performance was that of a tired team, understandable after a long coach journey north the previous evening.

Mike Atherton was missing with a recurrence of his back problem and they slipped to 50 for three before a partnership of 110 in 16 overs between Graham Lloyd and Andy Flintoff.

For Flintoff an innings of 69 from 58 balls represented public therapy after an horrific run which had brought him 110 runs from 16 innings in all forms of cricket since a match-winning 70 against

Warwickshire on June 29. He hit three sixes, two straight off Shaun Udal and a fierce pull over square leg off McLean. But his dismissal, a victim of his own power as he mistimed a full toss to long on, triggered a thoroughly uncharacteristic collapse as Lancashire lost seven wickets for 62 in the last nine overs.

Lloyd was stumped down the leg side off John Stephenson, Dimitri Mascarenhas took a sharp return catch to dismiss Wasim, and McLean polished off the tail so effectively that Lancashire were bowled out with two balls of the 40 overs remaining.

But again their supreme efficiency in the field won through. On Sunday, Austin, complaining that Saturday's rain had disrupted Lancashire's usual celebrations by preventing a finish that day, had said: "But if we win tomorrow we'll have a real good night on Monday." The match at Trent Bridge tomorrow thus promises to be a stern test even for Lancashire.

Lancashire

J.P. Crawley c Udal b Mascarenhas 7

M. Chilton b Hartley 20

N.W. Fairbrother c Aymer b Stephenson 10

D. Lloyd c Aymer b Stephenson 26

A. Flintoff c Koochin b Mascarenhas 16

Wasim Akram c b Mascarenhas 9

D. Hogg c b McLean 16

D. Austin b Flintoff 10

G. Yasee not out 4

D. Chappell b McLean 2

P. Martin b McLean 2

Extras (bbl, w, nb) 21

Total (39.4 overs) 202

Fall of wickets 25, 48, 50, 100, 162, 172, 194, 196, 200

Bowling: Connor 6-0-20-1, McLean 7-4-28-2, Mascarenhas 6-0-24-3, Hartley 8-0-40-1, Stephenson 5-0-42-2, Udal 4-0-51-0

Hampshire

G.W. White c Austin b Wasim 27

J.P. Stephenson c Akram b Austin 10

R.A. Smith c Hogg b Chappell 44

W.S. Kendall c Austin b Martin 44

A.D. Mascarenhas b Martin 9

N.A. McLean c Chappell b Martin 3

G. Yasee not out 10

D. Chappell b Wasim 16

A.N. Ayres not out 8

Extras (bbl, w, nb) 24

Total (for 7.40 overs) 198

Fall of wickets 25, 33, 140, 156, 162, 172, 174

Bowling: Connor 6-0-20-1, McLean 7-4-28-2, Mascarenhas 6-0-24-3, Hartley 8-0-40-1, Stephenson 5-0-42-2, Udal 4-0-51-0

Lancashire won by 10 runs.

Lancashire were bowled out with two balls of the 40 overs remaining

But again their supreme efficiency in the field won through

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## Athletics

## Fredericks is latest Games withdrawal

Duncan Mackay in Johannesburg

FRANKIE FREDERICKS is the latest of the world's top sprinters to withdraw from the 100 metres at the Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur next week, throwing wide open a race that was won four years ago by Linford Christie.

"I'm definitely not going," said the Olympic silver medalist at 100m and 200m, who is preparing to compete in the World Cup final for Africa here at the weekend. "It's too much at the end of a long season. My body can't take the heat, semi-final and final."

Four of the world's fastest five sprinters this year are eligible to compete in the Games but none will. The world-record holder Donovan Bailey, his Canadian teammate Bruny Surin and Trinidad's Ato Boldon all announced last month they would not be running. Boldon tops the year's world rankings with 9.58sec, followed by Surin (9.88) and Bailey and Fredericks (both 9.93). In addition, Nigeria's suspension from the Commonwealth rules out Sean Ogunkeya, No. 7 in the world with 9.94.

Fredericks threatened to boycott the Games earlier this year because he had still not received the 100m bronze medal he won in Victoria in 1994 after the runner-up Horace Dove-Edwin was disqualified for drugs. He confirmed last night he had received the medal and tiredness alone explained his withdrawal.

It leaves Obadele Thompson of Barbados, who has run 10.00 this summer, as the favourite but England's Darren Campbell, who ran 10.04 to win the European title in Budapest last month, must be in contention, as Doug Walker will be in the 200m if he recovers from knee surgery in time. Fredericks is the 200m champion.

## Rowing

## Atrill strokes eight into contention

Christopher Dodd in Cologne

THE British men's eight yesterday showed the team here their new order and summer training camp when they came a good second to Germany in a heat of the World Championships. Though this condenses them to a repechage tomorrow, their performance suggested medal contention on Sunday.

The eight, which ranks as the second boat after the flag-ship four of James Cracknell, Steve Redgrave, Tim Foster and Matthew Pinsent, changed their order after coming third in the final round of the World Cup in Lucerne in July. The switch of Louis Atrill to stroke, coupled with concentrated time together, looks to have been productive. If they are not looking at gold, they should compete for the silver and bronze with the Americans, Russia, Canada and Romania.

The lightweight four find themselves in much the same situation. Having struggled to click all season they made Denmark, the Olympic and world champions, work hard to preserve their unbeaten record. Second place, as with the eight, means a repechage but they should have the confidence now to challenge the Danes again on Sunday.

The key to their spirit is absolute commitment to the boat. There are no lightweight eights in the Olympics and those in that event here hoping to jump ship to the four in 2000 may be unlucky. James Brown, Jim McNiven, Dave Lennan and John Warnock could close the door on them this week.

Others to progress yesterday were Nick Strange and Adam Grey, who qualified for the semi-finals of the lightweight pairs, and Tracy Langlands and Jane Hall, who landed the same stage of the lightweight double sculls.

## Motor Racing

## Herbert leaves Sauber to join Stewart

JOHNNY HERBERT will switch to the Stewart-Ford team for the 1999 Formula One world championship after three largely fruitless seasons with Sauber.

The signing of the 34-year-old British driver, who has been struggling for much of this season, will help Ford and Stewart to achieve those targets, Herbert said. "The team is still in its infancy. They are

disappointed with what they've had this season, but you learn from things like that and learn what to improve."

Ford was particularly anxious that Stewart should recruit a driver with a proven record. Herbert's Rubens Barrichello has been tipped to stay as Herbert's team-mate. The deal has not yet been finalised but if it is, Stewart's other driver, Jos Verstappen, would be the odd man out.

"As a British team it is very nice for us to have a British driver with so much experience," said Jackie Stewart. "We are looking forward to working with him."

Ford's motorsport director Martin Whitaker added: "Johnny is a wonderful motivator." Herbert won the 1995 British and Italian Grands Prix, both successes achieved after his Benetton team-mate Michael Schumacher collided with Damon Hill's Williams, but did not continue with the team the following year.

Herbert is now virtually certain to find himself lining up on the same grid as his former Lotus Formula One team-mate Alex Zanardi, who on Sunday clinched the CART championship for the second

successive year by finishing fourth at Vancouver.

It is expected that Zanardi will be confirmed as the new Williams signing for 1999, partnering Ralf Schumacher and displacing Heinz-Harald Frentzen, who is being tipped to take his fellow German's position alongside Damon Hill at Jordan.

A further reminder of the small world of international racing is that the Vancouver race was the second successive CART victory for the Scot Dario Franchitti, a protégé of the Stewart dynasty from the time he contested the 1994

British Formula Three championship under the Paul Stewart Racing banner.

During that Formula One season Franchitti was eclipsed by his team-mate Jan Magnussen who went on to clinch Barrichello in the Stewart-Ford team only to be dropped before this year's French Grand Prix after a succession of disappointing performances.

It does not take too much imagination to see Franchitti, who is managed by Jacques Villeneuve's mentor Craig Pollock, following Zanardi back across the Atlantic.

## American Football

## Hearst record run sinks Jets

## Mark Tran sees the season kick-off with a last-gasp victory for San Francisco 49ers

A SPECTACULAR 96-yard burst by Garrison Hearst in overtime allowed the San Francisco 49ers to scrape past the ever-improving New York Jets, who showed they can play with the best under the tough coaching of Bill Parcells.

"You can't be more disappointed than I am right now," Parcells said. "That was a tough one to lose. It came down to just being able to concentrate long enough to win one of these, but we just didn't do it. I hope we take this, build on it."

The 49ers were pushed to the limit despite playing at home on a sunny if windy day. The winning play came as San Francisco sought breathing room for Steve Young to mount one of his patented late drives. Hearst spared Young and his receivers the trouble.

Hearst broke through a mass of white-and-green jerseys, stiffarmed the rookie safety Kevin Williams at the 20, stormed past some feeble tackles, picked up some blocks downfield and was home to give the 49ers a 36-30 win.

It was the longest run from scrimmage in the 49ers' history, providing a dramatic climax to an aerial duel between Young and Glenn Foley, making his first opening-day start. "I just wanted to hit the hole quick and get what I could. Things happened after that," said Hearst, who rushed for 187 yards and two touchdowns on 20 carries.

**Favourite pulls out of St Leger, page 13**  
**Spurs head the queue for Merson, page 14**

**Lancashire land their second trophy, page 15**  
**Graf hustled out of the Open, page 15**

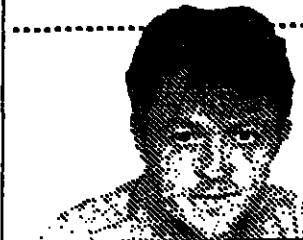
# SportsGuardian

## Business as usual for Manchester United



Cliff hanger... Manchester United go through the motions of normality but, with their future up in the air, not to say Sky, Alex Ferguson's head goes down at the club's training ground, The Cliff, while the players follow the party line and understandably find it difficult to keep their eye on the ball. PHOTOGRAPH: CHRIS NEILL

## Say what you like about that Murdoch ...



Jim White

IT IS not easy to write this. For a pontificator whose livelihood is based on the paper-thin pretence of impartiality, it is the journalistic equivalent of a suicide note. But I was wrong, wronger than a Shane Warne wrong'un on a turning wicket.

My inaccuracy in front of goal makes Stéphane Guivarch look a quality finisher. So out of touch am I, my only future is as an adviser to William Hague.

For years I have been wedded to the romantic notion that if football forgets about its grass roots, alienates its core support and squeezes out the humble punter, it will die. And I was wrong.

Here's how wrong I was: I predicted the Premier League was a latterday South Sea Bubble about to burst. I reckoned too much live television would suffocate interest. I confidently announced Euro 96 was the peak and that, once the reality of dull nil-nilers on wet Wednesdays in January kicked in, the bandwagon would roll elsewhere.

With the news of Rupert Murdoch's mooted takeover of Manchester United I have been forced to raise the white flag and retreat into a shed in the garden with a sign on the door which reads: "Luddite. Please do not disturb".

This is the new reality: what Murdoch has done by his bid is to alter the entire proposition of English league football. At a stroke he has internationalised it, propelled it towards a vast new market, ensured it will become the major player in the world's game. And at the same time he has probably signed the death warrant for a couple of dozen small clubs.

Murdoch's bid for United absolutely fits into his business strategy. For a while he was rumoured to be interested in Spurs. But leaks of a deal to bail out Alan Sugar were clearly a smoke-screen for the Digger's real motives: why would he waste time with an operation in crisis when he has the resources to buy in at the top of the market?

With United in his portfolio he will own the software to complement the hardware of his broadcasting arm. When he transmits matches over his satellite operation in China

and the Far East he can cross-promote United merchandise: when his American pay-per-view channels start offering a service of Premier-ship football into the homes of Californian "Soccer Moms", he will take a handy slice of the cash generated by the United shirts their offspring will demand.

In Australia, Singapore and South Africa the opportunities for selling are enough to send even his eyes spinning like cartoon fruit machines. As a true internationalist he is aware of the vast potential that Premier-ship football has to become the world's favourite sporting brand.

And now he is in the position to ensure it does. In five years' time, when Martin Edwards sees what Rupert Murdoch has done with the organisation he once owned, he will wince at how cheap he sold it. That £80 million he will trouser from this deal will look very small beer.

ONE thing is certain for the supporter in England: things will change when this bid goes through. They will change to suit the major bank-roller of the operation, Sky Television. Until now United, as the biggest player in negotiations, acted as a check and balance to Sky. In the future, when the head of Sky sits down with the chairman of our biggest club to decide how much money should be paid for the rights to screen matches, only a mirror need be involved.

Thus pay-per-view of Premier-ship matches — which was put on hold this year only because United would not agree a fee and started investigating the possibility of a channel of their own — will become a reality.

Likewise a pay-per-view European Conference without promotion and relegation will follow. It will be a huge money-maker, with millions watching in pubs and grounds filled by event junkies anxious to be seen at the big occasions and prepared to pay through the nose for the privilege.

Moreover it will be in United's commercial interest to ensure that spending money allocated to football in British households is taken by pay-per-view subscriptions rather than at the turnstiles of smaller clubs, pushing wobbling outfits into bankruptcy.

As for me, you will catch me in front of the television. As a football fan I will have little option but to take up one of Murdoch's impending offers. And he knows it.

Football meltdown, G2

## Spurs face £5m tag on Graham

**Martin Thorpe finds Leeds trying to hang on to their manager with a pre-emptive strike and a typically defensive approach**

LEEDS UNITED placed a £5 million price tag on their manager George Graham yesterday but it is unlikely to prevent Tottenham Hotspur making a formal approach for his services.

The Yorkshire club also said they would refuse Spurs permission to speak to Gra-

ham if that formal approach were made. But, again, this is unlikely to frighten off the London club, who are seeking to replace Christian Gross, who was sacked on Saturday.

Leeds are well enough versed in the ways of modern football to know that, if Graham wants to leave, there is

little the club can do about it, whether they refuse permission or not. If Graham did want to leave, Leeds would probably bow to the inevitable and negotiate a sensible compensation package to clear the decks for a new manager.

Although Leeds confirmed

that no official approach has been made, they are desperate to keep a man who has significantly improved the team's performance in the two years since he took over from Howard Wilkinson.

Despite operating on a tight budget Graham led the team to Uefa Cup qualification last season, at the same time rebuilding his own reputation after the bung scandal at Arsenal which brought him a one-year ban from the game.

The premise for Leeds's £5 million compensation assessment is based on the contract Graham signed in December, which takes him to 2001 on a salary of £1 million a year. That agreement, say Leeds, includes a clause stating that any club wishing to speak to Graham must pay £1 million and, if they land their man, must pay up Graham's contract and an extra £1 million in compensation.

The Leeds chairman Peter Risdale added another barrier when he said: "I have said consistently that George Graham is under contract to us. The board's reaction if anyone came in for him would be to refuse them permission to talk to him."

Although it is understood Graham would like a move back to London, he played down the speculation yesterday. "Every time a job comes up it seems my name is linked with it," he said. "I am not giving these stories credibility by commenting on them."

However, Graham knows it would be improper for him to comment before a formal approach is made. Only then could he reveal the Leeds board any interest he might have in the Spurs job.

If a manager wants to leave a club, he can in theory walk out. The club can try to enforce his contract through the courts but that involves a long, costly and messy process. Even if the club win, there is little benefit in an unmotivated and disenchanted manager. A club will normally accept their losing hand.

If Graham does end up leaving, Leeds are likely to turn to Kenny Dalglish. The board is known to admire the talents of the former Liverpool and Newcastle manager and would be prepared to give him the time, denied him by the directors at St James' Park, to build a championship-challenging team.

Tony Adams gave a surprise vote of confidence to Tottenham yesterday over their supposed interest in Graham. "I love George, he was very good for me," he said. "We had a hell of a relationship here and I think he is a great manager."

"If he got the Tottenham job I am sure he would do fantastically well there, like he did at Arsenal and like he is doing at Leeds. I respect any good player or manager and he would be a good choice for Spurs."



# QUICK

# FIX

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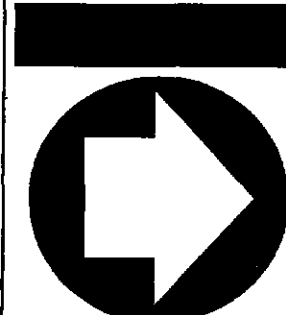
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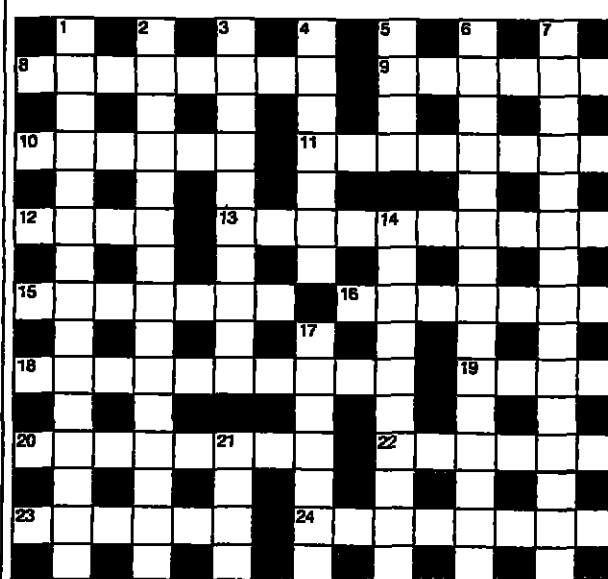
It is a show of artists mining what few seams there are left, staking claims on abandoned lots, claiming territory not their own and doing things any sensible person would say weren't worth attempting in the first place.

Adrian Searle on Young Americans

G2 p8

## Guardian Crossword No 21,374

Set by Paul

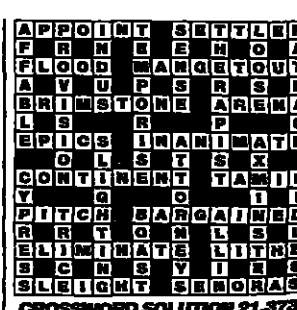


### Across

- 8 Rupees as fake as a shark's wallet? (3,5)
- 9 Topping fruit, the pineapple (6)
- 10 Yarn attributed to Homer in 'Odyssey' (6)
- 11 DTI reshuffle holds back absurd poet (8)
- 12 Newspaper requires a series of notes (4)
- 13, 18 PC Short cleverly called a night manoeuvre (10,10)
- 15 Those who should reform did reform in book (7)
- 16 Sleep disturbed by partners' organs (7)
- 18 See 13
- 19 Pulls boats (4)
- 20 Forty mad cows rushed around (8)
- 22 National hero's comeback asks for a lot of time (6)

### Down

- 1 Children's work must be safe, scoffed granny (5,3,4)
- 2 Capitol deception leading to the deceptively obvious? (7,8)
- 3 'Evergreen Air Fresh', and avert BO (5,5)
- 4 Black magic is boring without sh? (7)
- 5 See 23
- 6 Politician, the usual weird Marlin alien (15)
- 7 Then all see grand Brahms and Liszt opera (6,3,6)
- 14 Paul's in jail (holding US money) for obstruction (10)
- 17 Monstrous duck silent movie actress carries about (7)

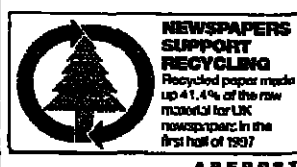


CROSSWORD SOLUTION 21,373

### 21 Stone needs working with axes (4)

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